

SOCIETY AT TUNBRIDGE WELLS

In the Eighteenth Century – and After



LEWIS MELVILLE

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A. B. Lawford
Jan 9/16



ROYAL TUNBRIDGE WELLS

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

BATH UNDER BEAU NASH

BRIGHTON: ITS HISTORY, ITS FOLLIES, AND ITS
FASHIONS

WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY:

A BIOGRAPHY

THE THACKERAY COUNTRY

SOME ASPECTS OF THACKERAY

THE LIFE AND LETTERS OF LAURENCE
TERNE

THE LIFE AND LETTERS OF WILLIAM BECK-
FORD, OF FONTHILL

THE FIRST GEORGE

"FARMER GEORGE"

"THE FIRST GENTLEMAN OF EUROPE"

CAROLINE OF BRUNSWICK

THE BEAUX OF THE REGENCY

SOME EXQUISITES AND A WOMAN

With Helen Melville

LONDON'S LURE

FULL FATHOM FIVE

THE SEASONS

AND OTHER ANTHOLOGIES



Elizabeth Chudleigh, Countess of Bristol.

SOCIETY AT ROYAL TUNBRIDGE WELLS

IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY
—AND AFTER

BY
LEWIS MELVILLE

ILLUSTRATED FROM RARE PRINTS
AND PORTRAITS IN THE COLLECTION OF
A. M. BROADLEY

LONDON
EVELEIGH NASH
1912



TO
MY VERY GOOD FRIEND
HARRY FURNISS
THIS BOOK
IS DEDICATED BY
THE AUTHOR

2056047

PREFACE

ALTHOUGH Tunbridge Wells is, with the exception of Bath, the oldest watering-place in the kingdom, and was for a century second in importance as a spa only to the Somersetshire city, no great mass of literature has arisen around it. Innumerable books have been written on Bath, many volumes have been devoted to Brighton: only two authors have written the history of "The Wells," Thomas Benge Burr, in 1766, and Paul Amsinck, sometime Master of the Ceremonies there, in 1810. These works are now scarce, and, further, it cannot be said that either has any great claim to consideration, for the account of the place is not by any means complete, and more than half the space is devoted to mansions, some of which are not in the immediate neighbourhood. The field, therefore, may fairly be considered clear for a twentieth-century writer, who, whatever his failings may be, has at least the advantage of presenting to the reader information as to the place and to the company that

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resorted there, derived from old books unknown to Burr and Amsinck, from correspondence that has since seen the light, and from letters hitherto unpublished. It has been my object to bring together all the information that can be gleaned about "Tunbridge Wells," and, in the furtherance of this project, I have not hesitated freely to use contemporary descriptions of the place and of the company.

The first mention of Tunbridge Wells is to be found in Dudley, Lord North's *A Forest of Varieties*, privately printed in 1645, and published fourteen years later under the title of *A Forest Promiscuous of Various Seasons' Production*. In Gramont's *Memoirs* is an account of the visit of the Court to the Kentish spa in 1663, and then, except for casual allusions by Evelyn and Pepys, there is silence until Celia Fiennes rode *Through England on a Side-saddle in the time of William and Mary*, and visited Tunbridge Wells in 1697. How the growing town appeared in 1712 may be read in John Macky's *Journey through England*. Twelve years later Daniel Defoe was there, and he put on record his impressions in his *Tour through the Island of Great Britain*. As has been said, Burr wrote his history of the

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watering-place in 1766; and five years later was published, anonymously, *A General Account of Tunbridge Wells and its Environs*. Hasted gave an account of the town towards the end of the eighteenth century in the third volume (published in 1797) of his monumental *History and Topographical Survey of the County of Kent*; and thirteen years later Amsinck described the domain over which he reigned, in a stately quarto entitled *Tunbridge Wells and its Neighbourhood*. In 1821 Dr. John Evans, a schoolmaster, published *An Excursion to Brighton . . . A Visit to Tunbridge Wells . . . and A Trip to Southend*; but this, so far as "The Wells" is concerned, is based mainly upon the earlier authorities, as are also the *Guides* issued by Sprange and Colbran.

Further information has been gleaned from the numerous *Tunbridge Miscellanies*, *Tunbridge Epistles*, and similar productions, the best of which, *Tunbridgiala*, was written in 1726 by John Byrom. Unfortunately among these many effusions in verse there is nothing that will bear comparison with Anstey's *New Bath Guide*. An exhaustive examination of the memoirs and correspondence of the period amply repays the labour, for there are many

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references to be found to Tunbridge Wells, particularly in the letters of Lady Jane Coke, Mrs. Elizabeth Montagu, Samuel Richardson, John Gay, Dr. Arbuthnot, Gilbert West, George Selwyn, Lady Jerningham, and Lady Granville, and the autobiographies of Madame D'Arblay, Michael Kelly, and Richard Cumberland.

Tunbridge Wells made its bow in polite letters in Waller's poem written "At Penhurst" in 1645, and again in Congreve's verses "To My Lady at Tunbridge." The place was chosen as the scene of Thomas Rawlins' comedy, *Tunbridge Wells, or, A Day's Courtship*, printed in 1678, and it again figured in a play by Thomas Baker, *Tunbridge Walks, or, The Yeoman of Kent*, which was produced in 1703 at Drury Lane, and revived several times during the eighteenth century. Fanny Burney introduced it into *Camilla*, and on the Pantiles may be met the Dennels, Mrs. Arlbery, Lord Newford, Sir Sedley Clarendel, Lord O'Lerney, Sir Theophilus Jarard, Lady Alethea Selmore, Mr. Mandlebert, and others, including the heroine, who unhappily ran into debt at the milliner's shop at that fashionable resort. "The Wells" makes its contribution to *The*

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Wanderer, and later Thackeray drew a picture of the place at the heyday of its fame in *The Virginians*, subsequently giving his recollections of it in a "Roundabout Paper." The last great novelist to take it as a background was George Meredith, who, in *The Tale of Chloë*, sends the Duchess of Dewlap there, and in the story gives an admirable portrait of *Beau Beamish*.

Messrs. Duckworth & Co. have kindly allowed me to insert a letter from Lord Boyle to Mrs. Salkeld (*Orrery Papers*); Messrs. Smith, Elder & Co., one from Samuel Rogers to his sister Sarah (P. W. Clayden: *Rogers and his Contemporaries*); Messrs. Macmillan & Co. Ltd., extracts from the *Jerningham Letters*; and Messrs. Kegan Paul & Co., Ltd., extracts from the correspondence of Lady Jane Coke. To Mr. A. M. Broadley, that philanthropic collector who has no greater pleasure than to place his treasures at the disposal of students, I am under a very heavy obligation. He has given me much information about Tunbridge Wells; and he has allowed me to print in this volume unpublished letters (the originals of which are in his possession) written from that spa by Mrs. Montagu, Mrs. Donellan, the "good" Lord Lyttelton,

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and Lord Rosslyn, as well as to insert the text of that unique publication, *A Rod for Tunbridge Beaus*, of which there is no copy in the British Museum. Further, Mr. Broadley has generously drawn upon the resources of his library, and supplied me with the entire series of illustrations with which this work is adorned.

LEWIS MELVILLE.

*Salcombe,
Harpenden, Herts.,
Christmas 1911.*

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ROYAL TUNBRIDGE WELLS

CHAPTER I

THE DISCOVERY OF THE SPRINGS (1606)

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IN the history of many watering-places there is frequently to be found in the earlier historians some marvellous legend concerning the discovery of the springs that brought it into notoriety. Bath, for instance, has its pre-historic legend, as, indeed, befits the oldest spa in the kingdom. Its authentic account begins with the Romans, under whose rule *Aquæ Sulis* (or *Solis*), as they called it, became a place of considerable importance. The traditions, however, go back so far as the British King *Bladud*, son and successor of *Hudibras*, and father of *Lear*. *Geoffrey of Monmouth*, writing in the middle of the twelfth century his *Historia Britonum*, states that “*Bladud* built *Kaerbadus*, now Bath, and made hot baths in it for the benefit of the publick, which he dedicated

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to the Goddess Minerva; in whose temple he kept fires that never went out nor consumed to ashes, but as soon as they began to decay were turned into baths of stone. . . . This Prince was a very ingenious man, and taught necromancy in his Kingdom, nor left off pursuing his magical operations till he attempted to fly to the upper regions of the air with wings he had prepared, and fell down upon the Temple of Apollo in the city of Trenovantum, where he was dashed to pieces.” Spenser next related the story of this Father of Aviation, and Shakespeare touched on it. Thomas Coryate, in his *Crudities*, tells yet another tale :—

“*Lud Hudibrass*, a meazle voule, did send his *zun* a
graezing,
Who vortuend hither for to cum, and geed his pigs zum
peazen,
Poor *Bladud*, he was manger groun; his dad, which zum
call vather,
Zet *Bladud* pig, and pig *Bladud*, and zo they ved
together.
Then *Bladud* did the Pigs invect, who, grunting, ran
away,
And vound whot Waters presently, which made him
fresh and gay.
Bladud was not so grote a Vool, but seeing what Pig
did doe,
He Beath’d and Wash’d, and Rins’d, and Beath’d,
from Noddle down to Toe.

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Bladud was now (Gramercy Pig!) a delicate vine
Boy,
So whome he trudges to his Dad, to be his only
Joy;
And then he built this gawdy Toun, and sheer'd his
Beard spadeways,
Which voke accounted then a Grace, though not so
now-a-Days.
Thwo thowsand and vive hundred Years, and Thirty-
vive to That,
Zince *Bladud's* Zwine did looze their Greaze, which we
Moderns call Vat.
About that Time, it was alzo, that *Ahob's* Zuns were
hanged,
A *Zezabel*, their Man (curz'd Deil!) caused *Naboth* be
stonechanged,
Chee cud zay more, but cham aveared, Voke will account
this Vable,
O Invidles! if yee woon not me, yet chee pray believe
the Table."

After this circumstantial account, date and all, given by Coryate, it would be offering an indignity to that poet to give the version related at length in John Wood's *Description of Bath* or in Richard Warner's history of that city. Let it suffice that when the new Assembly Room there was opened by Nash, a song, specially composed for the occasion, was sung in honour of King *Bladud*.

Tunbridge Wells has no miraculous legend

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of which to boast. A more prosaic, and, incidentally it may be mentioned, a better-authenticated incident is the basis of its future fame and well-being. Going back to the beginning it owes its existence to the deplorable fact that in the early years of the seventeenth century a young English nobleman played havoc with his health by indulging overmuch in riotous dissipation at the Court of James I. So, we may say, out of evil cometh good—which, it is not to be denied is a text more immoral than most, and one to be avoided by the preacher, lest evil is done in order that good may come—a result that cannot be depended upon. The nobleman in question, Dudley, third Baron North, was in the spring of 1606, being then twenty-five years of age, ordered, on pain of death through a lingering consumption, to leave the metropolis and its pleasures, and repair for a while to the country, in order that, the fates being propitious, a course of fresh air, simple diet, early hours, and an undesirably small quantity of intoxicating liquor, might assist his vigorous constitution to conquer the seeds of the fell disease with which he was threatened. The physicians not caring where he went so long as they got him

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away from town, and the young lord not caring where he went if he could not stay there, he accepted the offer of his friend, the Earl of Abergavenny, to repair to the latter's hunting-seat in Kent, Eridge House. There he amused him as well as he could with music and poetry, but he soon wearied of the solitude of a mansion surrounded on all sides by dense woods. There were no neighbours, no town worthy of the name within a respectable distance, and the invalid began to mope, a state of mind that reacted on his physical well-being. Finding that his health was no better in spite of the sacrifices he was making, he yielded to his desire again to participate in the gallantries of the Court, and determined, physicians or no physicians, with their leave or without it, to remain no longer at Eridge House. And now happened that which, had it occurred centuries earlier, would most assuredly have been set down by contemporary chroniclers as a miracle.

The road by which Lord North returned to London went through the woods, and at the very commencement of his journey, close by the only cottage on the Abergavenny estate, he passed a clear spring, which attracted his

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attention on account of the shining scum that everywhere floated on its surface. He stopped his carriage to look at this curious thing, and presently observed that the stream in its course to a neighbouring brook left a ruddy ochreous substance. These uncommon appearances puzzled him, and as a child eats a new berry that he sees for the first time, so the young nobleman, borrowing a vessel from the cottage, drank of the water. The peculiar taste convinced him that it was no ordinary water, and the chroniclers aver that it then occurred to him that it possessed mineral qualities that might be valuable. Even the more cultivated folk of that day were not exempt from superstition, and it may be that Lord North thought that the discovery he had made was a special sign vouchsafed to him by a guardian angel. Anyhow, happily he had the good sense to send an attendant back to Eridge House to secure four bottles, and these he filled and took to his London physicians for examination.

The physicians reported favourably, pronouncing the springs to be chalybeate; and they induced Lord North, as soon as the warm weather returned and the roads were practi-

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cable, to return to Eridge House to take a course of the waters. Whether, however, their advice was based upon their belief in the efficacy of the mineral properties of the spring, or whether they took advantage of their patient's belief in its qualities to persuade him again to lead for some time a restful life, who shall say? Who shall say, either, whether it was the waters or the quiet life that effected the cure—may it not be, perhaps, that the diagnosis of the physicians was wrong?—but after three months at Lord Abergavenny's seat the young nobleman returned to the metropolis in robust health. Although he forthwith plunged again into the gallantries in which he found so much pleasure, and although he persevered in indulgence in the pleasures of the town for many years, he never afterwards showed any further sign of the disorder from which he was supposed to have suffered, never again, though he lived to the ripe old age of fourscore and five.

This story of the discovery of the waters at Tunbridge Wells has never been disputed, and therefore it may be put on record even in this sceptical age that, as the old chronicler, Burr, the first historian of Tunbridge Wells, quaintly

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expressed it, “so trifling an incident as the colour of the ground about the water of a wild unused wood, has filled the desert with inhabitants and made plenty smile o’er the barren heath.”

CHAPTER II

THE DEVELOPMENT OF TUNBRIDGE WELLS (1606--1697)

THE discovery of the waters was, of course, communicated to Lord Abergavenny, who at first seems to have received the news with indifference; but after the recovery of Lord North thought it might be worth while inquiring into it. He came down to Eridge, obtained from Mr. Weller, the Lord of the Manor, permission to clear away the woods around the springs, and then sent for medical experts, who found no less than seven springs impregnated with iron. Over the two principal springs, the Earl ordered wells to be sunk. He then had a stone pavement laid round them, and the whole enclosed with wooden rails in a triangular form. So much effected, he ceased his labours.

A few invalids came down to try the healing effects of the waters, and, some of these deriving benefit, the place began to be talked

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of, and more visitors came. Nowadays a great landowner has often set himself to develop or create a holiday resort, and in more than one instance has been rewarded for his trouble with a vast fortune. At the beginning of the seventeenth century, however, the English watering-place had not yet come into existence. There was, indeed, no demand for any such resort, for people had not developed the habit of taking holidays, or, anyhow, of taking them away from home. Travelling was so inconvenient, so full of hardship, and so dangerous, too, that even the wealthy, who could reduce the difficulties to a minimum, were not inclined to take more journeys than were necessary; while it was, further, so expensive, that the poorer classes could not have indulged in it even if the spirit had moved them. London was the rendezvous of the aristocracy, who met there, and nowhere else, for the diversions in which they indulged; going sometimes to their country-seats to partake of such sport as was to be obtained, and, even whilst there, looking forward to the time when they could return to the metropolis and partake again of the pleasures dear to their hearts. In the country they were doomed to solitude, there

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being few neighbours of their own rank within a reasonable distance, and the upper-middle class being then non-existent. The state of the roads in winter was such as to render intercourse between comparatively near neighbours at that season of the year almost impossible. A few invalids journeyed to Bath, but more undertook the hazardous journey to Spa or Bourbonne; and Lord North counted his discovery of the wells at Tunbridge no small boon to society, since, as he said in the posthumous work, *A Forest of Varieties*, "The Spaw is a chargeable and inconvenient journey to sick bodies, besides the money it carries out of the Kingdom, and inconvenience to religion."

Those who went to Tunbridge Wells in the first two decades of the seventeenth century were, then, few in number, and went not for gaiety and social intercourse, but solely in pursuit of health. Lord Abergavenny was consequently unable to see that any advantage would accrue to himself from sinking any money in providing conveniences for the visitors, and he made no attempt to develop the place, though, out of sheer good nature, he cut down a few trees that were in the way and made a road from the wells to the little town of

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Tunbridge, about five miles distant. Those who went to drink the waters went because they must, and were prepared to bear, though, it may be assumed, with many a grumble, all the discomforts incidental to taking a course of the waters. And the discomforts, it is not to be denied, were many and severe. Perhaps the worst was that there were no houses or buildings of any sort near the wells, and that the visitors had to stay so far away as Tunbridge, and journey backwards and forwards every day. As a consequence of this, the water-drinking season was limited to the period from May to October, when the road was most easily to be negotiated. It was also, doubtless, because of this that the place became known as Tunbridge Wells, which otherwise assuredly would not have been the case, for the wells were not in the parish of Tunbridge, but in that of Frant. "From the toune of Tunbridge," wrote Dr. Lodovick Rowzee, so early as 1632, "they have their name, as being the nearest Toune in Kent to them."

Tunbridge (which now prefers to call itself Tonbridge, to distinguish itself from its once humble dependency, Tunbridge Wells) was even at the time of the discovery of the springs

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a town of such considerable antiquity that the origin of its name is still a matter of dispute among antiquarians. When, about 1570, William Lombarde wrote his *Perambulation of Kent*, he had to admit his ignorance whether Tunbridge was derived from Thunebrugge, corruptly for Tonebrȳcze, that is, the Bridge over the Tone, or from Tunbrȳcze, in which case it signified "The Town of Bridges," "as indeed it hath many," the old topographer remarked; Tunbridge being on the Medway, which there branches out into several little streams. It has a well-authenticated history which dates back to the Conquest, when its castle was built by that Richard FitzGilbert who figures in "Domesday" as Richard de Clare, and also under the style of Richard de Tunbridge. The ruins give some idea of the strength of this fortress, which occupied an area of six acres. The Gate House, flanked with round towers, can still be seen, and the mound on which the keep once stood. The grandson of this Richard de Clare, bearing the same name, and generally believed to have been the first Earl of Hertford, founded in the reign of Henry III, "among other works of superstitious piety" (as an old chronicle puts it), a priory, near the castle,

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for the black canons of St. Augustine, which he dedicated to St. Mary Magdalen. "And in our memories," Lombarde mentions, "there was erected a faire Free Schoole, by the honest liberalitie of Sir Andrew Iudde, a Citizen and Maior of London, which submitted the same to the order and oversight of the company of Skinners there, whereof himself had become a member."¹ This scholastic establishment, which was founded in 1553, has endured through three and a half centuries, and is, of course, the famous Tonbridge School. Tunbridge was in the reign of Edward I a place sufficiently important to return two representatives to Parliament, and for a while after the wells became known it flourished exceedingly.

The fortune of "The Wells," as the place was often called, was established in June 1630, when Queen Henrietta Maria, the consort of Charles I, was sent there by her physicians to take the waters, her health having been seriously affected after she had been brought to bed with her second child, afterwards Charles II. For Her Majesty a portion of Bishop's Down Common was cleared, and there she dwelt in tents for six weeks, beguiling the time

¹ *Perambulation of Kent*, 383.

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by having masques and dances performed before her. One day she went for a walk, and, at some distance from the camp, being weary, she reclined beneath a birch-tree, where refreshment was served to her. She then ordered that a stone should be erected on that spot as a memorial of her travels in the county of Kent. An inscription was carved upon it by one of her suite, but this was subsequently obliterated by a Roundhead in the days of the Commonwealth. "Such generally," moralised Burr, a hundred and thirty years later, "are the effects of licentious rebellion, which is at all times destructive of the arts, and attended with ruin and confusion."¹ On the spot was presently erected an ale-house called The Queen's Stone, which, however, later hung out the sign of The Blue Bell. The attempts to commemorate the visit to "The Wells" of this regal lady were apparently doomed to failure, for though Dr. Rowzee, a physician practising at Ashford in Kent, in his treatise, published in 1632, entitled "*The Queenes Wells, that is, a Treatise of the nature and vertues of Tunbridge Water*", mentions that "those Springs may justly be called, as some doe call them now,

¹ *History of Tunbridge Wells*, 26.

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Queen Maries Wells," the name never obtained general currency. Dr. Rowzee's *brochure* is now very rare, and is only to be found in a few great libraries—there is a copy of the original edition in the British Museum. It was at the time accepted as authoritative, and was reprinted as a text-book for physicians so late as 1671. He ascribed a high value to the curative qualities of the water, which he recommended for many diseases; and it is interesting to read the minute instructions he laid down regarding the conditions under which it should be drunk. "Now concerning the time of the day, the morning, when the Sunne is an houre more or lesse high, is the fittest time to drinke the water," he wrote. "For when the Sunne beginneth to be of force, it doth attract some of the mineral spirits, and the water loses some of its strength; and betimes in the morning it is also best walking. And you are so to drinke the water, as you may have taken the quantitie, which you intend to take that day, within as small a space of time, as conveniently you can, without oppressing your stomach too much, as within an houre, or lesse, if you be able. Those that lye not too very far from the Springs, and are able to use their legges,

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shall doe better to come thither afoote, than to ride, because so they shall heate their bodies more. Yet doe I not intend they should be so hot, as to sweate, or to be readie to sweate, for that would doe hurt, but I meane onely that their naturall heate should be something awaked or excited, because then the water will be the better attracted, and have the more speedie passage." Rowzee may have been well advised in dwelling on these particulars; but it is difficult to believe that he was right in scoffing at the quantities prescribed to drinkers by other doctors, and advising his readers to imbibe the enormous quantities mentioned in the following passage, albeit he qualified his directions, by stating that due regard must be paid to the age, sex, and strength of the patient. "Now for the whole quantitie of the water to be taken in one morning, you shall see some that arise to a great quantitie . . . three hundred ounces, according to Nestor's yeares; yea, and some a smaller quantitie," thus he expressed himself on the subject. "And it is a thing, that will make the very women there filling the glasses to laugh, to see some patients sent thither by ignorant Physicians, and appointed to take ten or twelve

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ounces of water, and arise perhaps to twentie or thirtie ounces. But this may be a rule for a body of competent yeares and strength, to begin at thirtie, fortie, or fiftie ounces, and to arise by degrees, increasing this quantitie every day, to an hundreth, an hundreth and fiftie, or two hundred ounces, more or lesse, as they shall be able; and so againe to decline and decrease by degrees, ending where they began, when they are to leave the waters.”¹

The only comment a layman may venture to make is that three hundred ounces of water is fifteen pints. The quantity was, however, gradually diminished. “They used formerly indeed to drink two quarts at Tunbridge and Bath, which would make eighteen good glasses, but not large ones,” Francis Hare, Bishop of Chichester, wrote to his son in 1738. “But our physicians now unreservedly condemn that practice, and do not prescribe above a pint.”²

Though visitors were becoming more and more numerous, not until 1636 had it been thought worth while even to provide a resting-place for those who came from the neighbouring town to “The Wells,” which, says one

¹ *The Queenes Wells*, 57–59.

² *Hist. MSS. Com. Reports*—T. J. Hare’s MSS., 241.

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authority, "still retained its original dreary forest aspect." In that year, however, two humble cottages were erected, one for the accommodation of ladies, the other for gentlemen. The latter, on the site afterwards occupied by the Sussex Tavern, which in a later age would have been called a coffee-house, was then known as the Pipe-house, and there a man, after taking the waters, might return to smoke and have a dish of coffee. A subscription of half-a-crown entitled him to the privileges of the place, including the use of pipes. Two years after the cottages were put up, a further innovation was made. A green bank, presently to be known as the Upper Walk, was raised and levelled, and a double row of trees planted on its borders. About this time some tradesmen realised that the visitors, who had nothing whatever to do in the intervals between their glasses of water, might well be induced to while away their time with purchasing; and they began to attend during the water-drinking hours and display their wares in the shade afforded by the trees.

Still, the great inconvenience occasioned by the lack of lodgings nearer "The Wells" than Tunbridge continued, but at last in 1639 some

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houses for the accommodation of visitors were built at Southborough, about two and a half miles from the wells on the Tunbridge Road; and presently this example was followed at Rusthall, about a mile to the west of the Wells. It is worthy of note, that when, towards the end of the reign of Charles I, party spirit ran high, the cavalier visitors stayed at Southborough, the opposite faction at Rusthall. These places, however, did not supply sufficient accommodation, and what buildings there were, according to Burr, "were small and few at first, rather suited to the circumstances and apprehensions of the builders, than to the company they were intended for." "However," continues the historian, "the water was in such high reputation, that people gladly put up with any inconveniences on its account; and therefore, when these new houses were full, would pay an extravagant price for cottages, huts, or any place to screen them from the weather, rather than return home without partaking of the benefits thereof."

During the Commonwealth the development of Tunbridge Wells was arrested, and an almost entire cessation of building in the neighbourhood resulted, as much from the troubled state

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of the country as from the hostile attitude of the Puritans towards any form of amusement. The place was not, however, deserted, and in June 1652 John Evelyn took his wife and Lady Browne there to drink the water, establishing them in a little cottage for a while.¹ This set-back to Tunbridge Wells was but temporary, however, and after the Restoration it more than regained its earlier popularity. Southborough and Rusthall added to the accommodation hitherto provided for visitors, and began to furnish places of entertainment for those that came to drink the waters; and, in addition to many good lodging-houses, Rusthall soon boasted an assembly-room and a bowling-green, and thus eclipsed Southborough, which could only offer its patrons a bowling-green and a coffee-house. There was, however, as yet nothing to attract to Tunbridge Wells those who did not want the waters. Even now the houses were too far from the wells, the centre of attraction, where there was no place of entertainment, and still no place of shelter for the drinkers other than the two small cottages. A sudden shower of rain found

¹ *Diary and Correspondence of John Evelyn* (ed. Bray), I. 279.

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those at the wells unprotected, and drenched the wares of the tradesmen stationed under the trees, who consequently were chary, except on fine days when the weather was settled, of exposing choice goods.

One of the first visitors to Tunbridge Wells after the Restoration was John Evelyn, who came again in July 1661, on which occasion, "walking about the solitudes," he noted in his diary, "I greatly admired the extravagant turnings, insinuations, and growth of certain birch-trees among the rocks."¹ Another distinguished visitor, in the next year, was Henry Ellis, Governor of Georgia, who wrote on April 30 to William Knox, "I am drinking these waters by advice of my physician, preparatory to a course of chalybeates, either at Tunbridge or Spaw."² But the light of these notables fades into insignificance before the great event of a sojourn at "The Wells" in 1663 of Charles II and his Consort. In several accounts the date is given as 1664, but that the early one is correct can be proved beyond a doubt by reference to the correspondence

¹ *Diary and Correspondence of John Evelyn* (ed. Bray), I. 354.

² *Hist. MSS. Com. Reports—J. M. Heathcote's MSS.*, 87.

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printed in the Reports of the Historical Manuscripts Commission, backed by the authority of Pepys and the Duc de Cominges.

Henry Coventry to James, Earl of Ormond.

May 12, 1663.

. . . The Queen intendeth next month for Tunbridge. . . .¹

Extract from the Diary of Samuel Pepys.

July 22, 1663.

To-morrow, the King and Queen for certain go down to Tunbridge. But the King comes back again against Monday to raise the Parliament. . . .

Arthur, Earl of Anglesey to James, Earl of Ormond.

July 25, 1663.

. . . The Queen went to Tunbridge on Thursday last. . . .²

Arthur, Earl of Anglesey to James, Earl of Ormond.

July 28, 1663.

. . . The King, immediately after the prorogation went to Tunbridge to visit the Queen, and is not expected back till Thursday. . . .³

¹ *Hist. MSS. Com. Reports—Ormond MSS.*, III. 53.

² *Ibid.*, III. 63.

³ *Ibid.*, III. 64.

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Murrough, Earl of Inchiquin to Sir Richard Fanshaw.

July 29, 1663.

. . . That night the King went to the Queen at Tunbridge, where he stayed till this morning. . . .¹

Arthur, Earl of Anglesey to James, Earl of Ormond.

August 8, 1663.

. . . The Court being most of the week at Tunbridge, and like to continue there till Thursday. . . .²

Arthur, Earl of Anglesey to James, Earl of Ormond.

August 15, 1663.

. . . His Majesty goes this afternoon to Tunbridge, and returns on Tuesday with the Queen. . . .³

It is generally supposed that their Majesties took up their residence in a large house on Bishop's Down Common, which subsequently

¹ *Hist. MSS. Com. Reports—J. M. Heathcote's MSS.*, 127.

² *Hist. MSS. Com. Reports—Ormond MSS.*, III. 69.

³ *Ibid.*, III. 73.

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was used as a manufactory of "Tunbridge Ware." "Tunbridge Ware," it may be explained, was the principal trade of the place, and it took the form of a variety of toys and small articles, usually made in beech or sycamore, inlaid with yew or holly, and beautifully polished. Visitors to "The Wells" often purchased some pieces of the ware as souvenirs or for presents, and in the eighteenth century a considerable number of people were employed in its preparation, but it never became a thriving industry, in spite of the assertion of local writers, perhaps for the reason given by Samuel Derrick. "Were this manufacture probably smuggled abroad, and then imported as a foreign commodity, I am persuaded the people would run after it," he wrote in 1762; "but alas! everybody knows that it is English; and the encouragement is therefore poor."¹

Grammont, it may be observed, accompanied King Charles to Tunbridge Wells, "the place," he said, "of all Europe the most rural and simple, and yet, at the same time, the most entertaining and agreeable." Certainly

¹ *Letters from Liverpoole . . . Tunbridge Wells*, Sept. 2, 1762, II. 66.

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when the Court was there, however, its pleasures were less rural and simple than usual, the amours of the King and Prince Rupert and of lesser folk being notorious, and a visit of the players from Drury Lane to perform before their Majesties bringing a whiff of the atmosphere of the metropolis that may have been agreeable enough, but can scarcely be regarded as healthy. To Grammont historians of "The Wells" must be grateful, for from his Memoirs come the first descriptions of the place :—

"Tunbridge [Wells] is the same distance from London that Fontainebleau is from Paris, and is, at the season, the general rendezvous of all the gay and handsome of both sexes. The company though always numerous, is always select : since those who repair thither for diversion, ever exceed the number of those who go thither for health, every thing there breathes mirth and pleasure : constraint is banished, familiarity is established upon the first acquaintance, and joy and pleasure are the sole sovereigns of the place.

"The company are accommodated with lodgings in little, clean, and convenient habitations, that lie straggling and separated from

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each other, a mile and a half all around the Wells, where the company meet in the morning : this place consisted of a long walk, shaded by spreading trees, under which they walk while they are drinking the waters : on one side of this walk is a long row of shops, plentifully stocked with all manner of toys, lace, gloves, stockings, and where there is raffling, as at Paris, in the Foire de Saint Germain : on the other side of the walk is the market, and, as it is the custom here for every person to buy their own provisions, care is taken that nothing offensive appears on the stalls. Here, young, fair, fresh-coloured country girls, with clean linens, small straw hats, and neat shoes and stockings, sell game, vegetables, flowers, and fruit ; here one may live as well as one pleases : here is, likewise, deep play, and no want of amorous intrigues. As soon as the evening comes, every one quits his little palace to assemble on the bowling-green, where, in the open air, those who choose dance upon a turf more soft and smooth than the finest carpet in the world.”¹

The Duc de Cominges, the French Ambassador at the Court of St. James's, went with

¹ *Memoirs of Count Grammont* (Bohn's edition), 268.

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their Majesties to Tunbridge Wells, and in his letter dated August 1663 it is particularly interesting to read that at an age so far remote, and in spite of the difficulties of travelling in those days, London was as empty proportionately then as now. "La solitude se trouve maintenant dans l'une des plus grandes villes du monde. L'on n'y voit ni dames ni courtisans, les seigneurs s'étant retirés et, sans avoir aucune complaisance pour ceux qui restent, ils ont emmené leurs femmes," his Excellency wrote. "La Reine, avec sa cour, qui est assez nombreuse, est toujours à Tunbridge, où les eaux n'ont rien produit ce que l'on avait espéré. On peut les nommer les eaux de scandale, puisqu'elles, on pense, ruinent les femmes et les filles de réputation (j'entends celles qui n'avaient pas leur maris)." ¹ His indictment of Tunbridge Wells at this date as a hot-bed of scandal doubtless had truth enough in it, but what he said applied as much to Bath or any place where the well-to-do leisured classes assembled to while away a few pleasant weeks.

The retinues of the King and Queen were

¹ J. J. Jusserand, *A French Ambassador at the Court of Charles II*, 217.

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lodged at Somerhill (in olden days, written Summer Hill), about four and a half miles from "The Wells," an estate that has had a varied history. Once part of the demesnes belonging to the owners of Tunbridge Castle, it came into the possession of Stafford, Duke of Buckingham, on whose execution for high treason in 1521 it was held forfeited to the Crown. Presently Queen Elizabeth bestowed it upon Sir Francis Walsingham, from whom it descended to his daughter, who married, first, Sir Philip Sidney, then Robert Devereux, second Earl of Essex, and lastly Richard de Burgh, fourth Earl (and afterwards first Marquis) of Clanricarde. During the Commonwealth Lord Clanricarde's estates were sequestrated, and granted to the Earl of Essex, and after his death to the famous regicide John Bradshaw. At the Restoration Somerhill returned to its rightful owner, Margaret, daughter of Ulick, second Marquis of Clanricarde, who had married Charles, Viscount Muskerry, the eldest son of the fourth Earl of Clancarty. Lord Muskerry, as a compliment, it was said, to Catherine of Braganza, who had intimated her intention to pay another visit to the spa, made many improvements. He

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took away the old wooden railings placed round the wells by Lord Abergavenny and in their stead put up a stone wall; renewed the stone pavement within the barrier; placed a basin over the main spring for the better reception of the water; and raised a convenient hall to shelter the dippers from the weather, to which he added a projection that preserved the wells from the contamination of rain water. He also set up his arms over the gateway that led to the springs, and the arms remained there until the conclusion of the famous lawsuit (to which reference will presently be made), when the tenants, in token of their victory, took them down and placed them at the back of the Upper Assembly Rooms. That Lord Muskerry should have been the first to make these additions, which must from the first have been desirable, shows very clearly how primitive the arrangements were at this date, when Tunbridge Wells was already a recognised resort for the well-to-do classes. Other improvements were projected by this public-spirited Lord of the Manor, but before he could carry out these further operations he was killed in the naval engagement with the Dutch on June 3, 1665.

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At the end of the year 1664 the Plague sent many people from London to seek refuge at this, among other places; and soon it became patent alike to landowners and tenants that it was absurd that visitors should perforce have to reside five miles off at Tunbridge, or even so far away as Southborough or Rusthall. Clearly there was a handsome profit to be gleaned from these birds of passage, and there was no reason why the inhabitants of "The Wells" should not secure it. As a consequence of this train of thought, lodging-houses for the company, in the immediate vicinity of the springs, were built. At first Mount Ephraim, one of the three hills near the wells, was the favoured spot. It owed its name to the Baptists who erected a chapel there, as Mount Sion was given its designation by the Presbyterians and Independents who set up their places of worship on that eminence. The third hill was presently called Mount Pleasant, perhaps to emphasise the fact that it had no connection with Dissent. The Culverden, sometimes given in early guide-books as an independent hill, was, however, but a prolongation of the chine of Mount Ephraim. On Mount Ephraim was erected an Assembly

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Room, with a bowling-green adjacent, and a tavern, called The Castle, as well as many lodging-houses, and it was at Mount Ephraim House that Charles II and his Queen Catherine stayed when they came again in July 1666, with Prince Rupert, and, not far off, Nell Gwynn and Rupert's mistress, Mrs. Hughes.

After this date, the town of Tunbridge was no longer used by those who wanted to drink the water, and for many years it remained a deserted village. "The Houses in the Town are most ill-built, and the streets sorrily paved,"¹ Defoe noted in 1738; and so late as 1762 Derrick described it as consisting of one broad street, badly paved, with the redeeming feature now, however, of being adorned with some very good modern houses.² Southborough and Rusthall were likewise neglected, while Mount Ephraim rejoiced exceedingly. Its triumph, however, was short-lived. Mount Sion, still nearer the wells, was, for that reason, found more attractive; and about 1670 it was generally regarded as the fashionable quarter. It, too, soon boasted its ball-

¹ *Tour through Great Britain* (1838), I. 195.

² *Letters from Liverpoole . . . Tunbridge Wells*, Sept. 1762, II. 75.

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room, its bowling-green, and its houses for the accommodation of visitors. "Thus, in the course of a few years, we find Tunbridge forsaken; Southborough and Rusthall raised and ruined; Mount Ephraim drooping; and Mount Sion in the full bloom of prosperity," Burr has recorded. "This last, indeed, not only rivalled but despoiled, her predecessors, and triumphantly transferred their ornaments to herself; for many houses were brought from Southborough, Rusthall, and Mount Ephraim, to be rebuilt on Mount Sion; and some, whole and entire as they were, were wheeled on sledges to be fixed in this new seat of favour."¹ One shop, the same authority records, was actually brought in this manner from Mount Ephraim, with a band playing inside it, and a company drinking success to the purchaser. This savours of the miraculous, until we read in Mrs. Pitt Byrne's *Gossip of the Century* that in those days enterprising inhabitants had invented the ingenious and perhaps unique device of constructing little houses on sledges or wheels, which could be moved from one spot to another to suit the wishes of tenants. This, at least, was the ostensible reason for the

¹ Burr, *History of Tunbridge Wells*, 45.

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existence of these structures, but Mrs. Pitt Byrne attributes to the owners the sinister designs of escaping certain rates and taxes payable on permanent buildings. These erections were, of necessity, light and somewhat fragile, and in course of time were replaced by more elaborate buildings, but one of them endured, wheels and all, on the west side of the road leading to the Common, until the thirties of the nineteenth century.

The mundane requirements of man and woman having been for the moment more or less satisfied, it occurred to some one that it was advisable to make some provision for the spiritual needs of such part of the community as belonged to the Church of England. The Dissenters, Baptists, Presbyterians, and Independents were already catered for, but the nearest place of worship for members of the Established Church was the parish church of Speldhurst, two miles from "The Wells," too far for the majority of the visitors and residents to go, even on the Sabbath, or, at least, further than they felt inclined to go. In 1676 Lady Purbeck, of Somerhill, offered a plot of ground for a church in Tunbridge Wells itself, at one end of the Upper Walk, and the offer was, of

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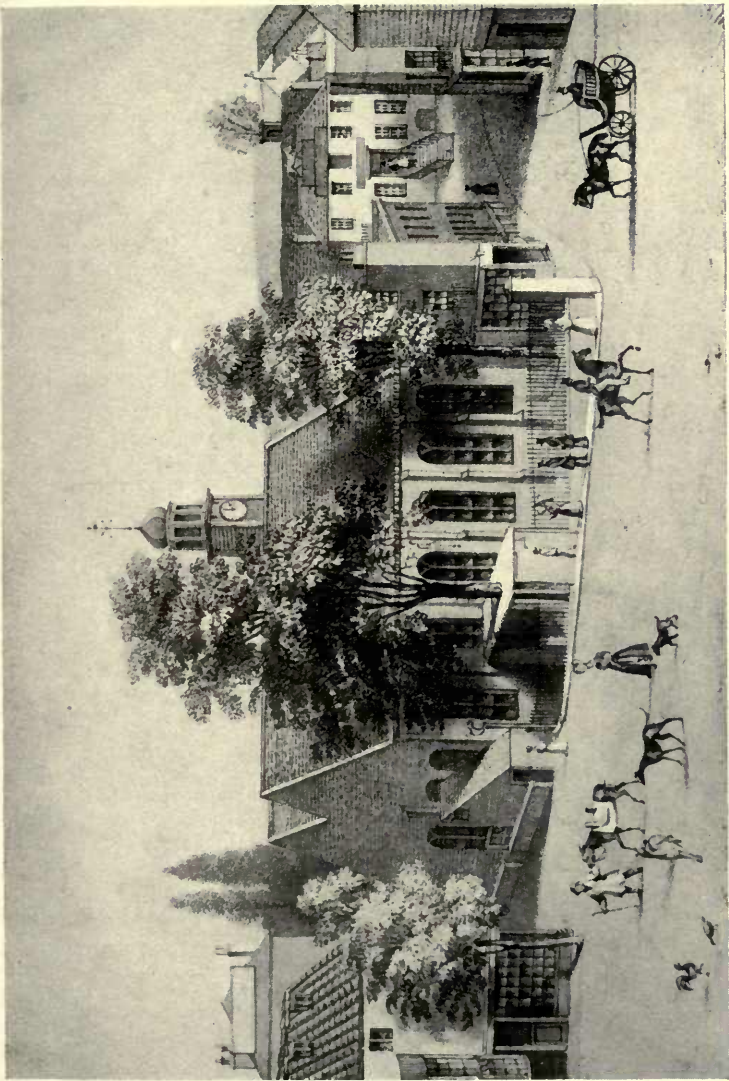
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course, gratefully accepted. It was presently shown that there was some irregularity in the grant, but the matter was subsequently put right by Lady Purbeck's son, John, Earl of Buckingham, who by a deed of trust, dated February 15, 1703, confirmed the gift. Other landowners in the neighbourhood volunteered to supply what timber was wanted, and all that was necessary to make a start with the building was money. To this desirable end the visitors were invited to contribute, but, sad to relate, they showed little alacrity in responding. It took eight years to collect the sum of (Burr says, but the authorities differ as to the amount) £1,385. The Chapel of Ease was then erected, and dedicated to King Charles the Martyr. Hasted, in his *Survey of Kent*, published in 1797, remarks that the church "stands remarkably—the pulpit in Speldhurst, the altar in Tunbridge, and the vestry in Frant"; and this statement, circulated for years before Hasted wrote, was generally accepted until Paul Amsinck ruthlessly showed it to be without foundation. "An erroneous idea has long prevailed," he wrote, "that this chapel is placed in the singular situation of occupying on its site, portions of three parishes and two

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counties, viz. Speldhurst and Tunbridge in Kent and Frant in Sussex. This might certainly have been the case ; for these parishes are actually in contact at a very small distance from the chapel ; but the idea is altogether unfounded, and has probably arisen and been cherished from some motives of interest. The original deed of gift specifies the land, given by the Earl of Buckingham, to be all in Tunbridge parish : and indeed it could not well have been otherwise, for it is a gift from the lord of the manor of South Frith of a portion of his manor, which on this side was co-extensive with the parish of Tunbridge, and is stated to abut on Water Doun Forest, which is the boundary of Speldhurst." In spite of Amsinck and the proof he adduced, the story, however, is still current and often repeated.

The Chapel of Ease was soon found too small for its ever-increasing congregation, and in 1696 it was enlarged and improved at the cost of £900, which sum was obtained by a special appeal. The expenses of re-erection and rebuilding the church did not exhaust the demands made in connection with this establishment, for the visitors and inhabitants were expected to provide the salary of the officiating



KING CHARLES'S CHAPEL, TUNBRIDGE WELLS, 1830

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minister. The clergyman's income, being derived entirely from voluntary contributions, must have varied from year to year, but the yearly receipts for this purpose averaged about £200. Adjoining the church a charity-school, under the control of the parson, was also set up, and was supported by the liberality of the visitors, as were, indeed, most of the places at "The Wells."

In the seventies of the seventeenth century Tunbridge Wells had thoroughly established its position as a favourite watering-place. Bath, of course, was easily the first, but it was too far from the metropolis for short visits, and besides, its season was the winter, whereas people came to Tunbridge Wells in the summer; and so their claims in no way clashed. If "The Wells" had a rival, indeed, it was not Bath, but Epsom, which had the advantage of being still nearer to London. Epsom, indeed, secured its niche in the annals of literature as early as 1673, in which year Shadwell produced his comedy, *Epsom Wells*, at Dorset Gardens; but the Kentish watering-place received a similar honour six years later at the hands of Thomas Rawlins in *Tunbridge Wells, or, A Day's Courtship*. Further proof,

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but of a very different kind, of the popularity of Tunbridge Wells as a fashionable resort is to be found in the fact that the camp-followers of the society that frequents such places, the women of the towns, were now to be found there in great numbers. Indeed, it was because of their presence that the Fish Ponds, a pretty rural garden laid out for the recreation of visitors, became so notorious that no respectable woman could show herself there. In due course, as always happens in these circumstances in the country, the gardens were ruined, and closed.

To provide for the ever-increasing influx of company it was necessary largely to increase the accommodation, and it was highly desirable that such accommodation should be in the immediate neighbourhood of the springs. In order to be able to do this, the Lord of the Manor, about 1676, entered into an agreement with his tenants, and hired of them the herbage of the manor for the term of fifty years at the yearly rent of ten shillings to each tenant. He then sublet his rights under this agreement, and shops and houses were erected, and not only on the Walks, but also on all available land in the vicinity. During the next twenty

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years the buildings multiplied in every direction, but in 1687 a fire destroyed all the shops and houses on the old Green Bank. Though at first regarded as a calamity, the conflagration was, so far as the town was concerned, a blessing in disguise, the wooden structures being replaced by others more substantial, constructed of stone and brick. The Walk was now laid out on a regular plan, an Assembly Room, coffee-houses, shops, and dwelling-house being erected with a uniform frontage, and a portico that ran from one end of the parade to the wells.

Royalty continued to be attracted to Tunbridge Wells, and in 1670 the Duke and Duchess of York, with their daughters, the Princess Mary and the Princess Anne, went there for a while during the season. The Duke of York came again four years later, and during this visit used frequently to walk to the High Rocks, about a mile and a half beyond the town, which in consequence became a resort so generally patronised that without much loss of time a cottage was erected, where shelter and refreshments could be obtained. The High Rocks are a natural curiosity, some of the eminences being so much as seventy, although the average

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height is about forty, feet. The Rocks, which bear such names as the Bell Rock, the Bridge Rock, and the Warning Rock, are separated by deep clefts fringed with foliage; and it has been suggested that the vale in which these rocks are situated was once the bed of a considerable river, a supposition borne out by the general lay of the country. A little distance, about half a mile, beyond the High Rocks is a spring called Adam's Well, which, though at one time strongly recommended by the local doctors, had, when Burr wrote the history of Tunbridge Wells, already been abandoned by the company, and relegated to the dipping of mangy dogs.

The Duke of York visited Tunbridge Wells after he had ascended the throne—the Dartmouth Manuscripts fix the date of his arrival as Thursday, August 18, 1687; and his daughter, the Princess Anne, went there with her husband, Prince George of Denmark, in the following year, when Archbishop Tillotson preached before her in the Chapel of Ease his sermon on the parable of the ten virgins. Thereafter Her Royal Highness came regularly season after season, and, in addition to the indirect benefit derived from her presence, the town benefited

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directly by the many gifts she made. On one occasion she presented a basin to the spring, afterwards called "The Queen's Well," which is situated on the left-hand side of the Pump Room, and distinguished from the other by its iron bars. In 1698 she brought with her her son, the Duke of Gloucester. He, playing with other children on the Upper Walk, made slippery by rain, fell: to prevent any such accident in future, the princess gave £100 for the paving of the Walk. This money she entrusted to a resident, who did not bestir himself to get the work done, and when the next year Her Royal Highness came and found that the Walk had not been improved, she went away, vowing she would never again visit "The Wells." The matter was now attended to, and the Walk paved with a baked tile, called pantile: wherefore the Upper Walk was afterwards known as "The Pantiles," until, in an early year of the nineteenth century, it was repaved with stone (the expense of which was defrayed by subscriptions from the inhabitants of the town), and after called, more magnificently and less picturesquely, The Parade. On the accession of Queen Anne a triple row of birch-trees was

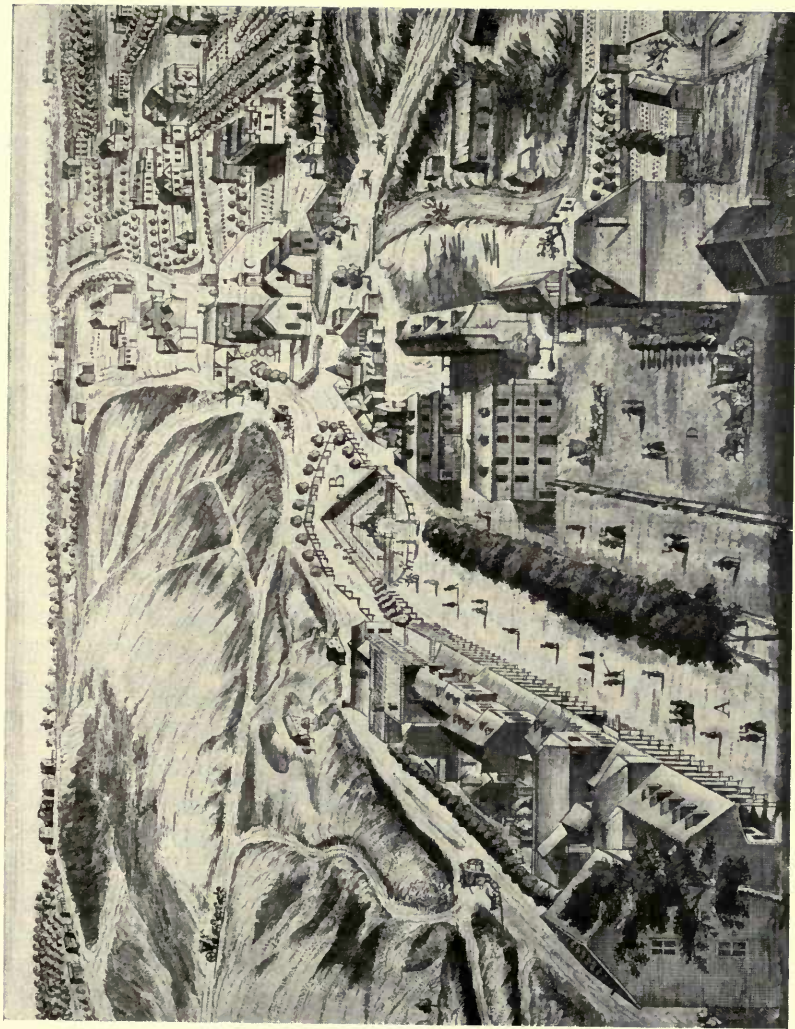
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planted on the Common, and called, in her honour, "Queen's Grove"; but this did not placate the angry royal lady, who kept her word, and never again came to Tunbridge Wells.

Year after year the popularity of "The Wells" increased, and a list of the visitors would include nearly all the well-known persons of the day. Lord Rochester went there with his wife in August 1683; but to students of the spa the most interesting visitor during the last two decades of the seventeenth century was a little-known lady, Celia Fiennes, who happily placed on record a description of the place as it was in 1697:—

"I being in Kent this year shall Insert something of Tunbridge. The waters I have drank many years wth great advantage—they are from the Steele and Iron mines, very quick springs Especially one well. There are two wth Large basons of stone fixt in y^e Earthe wth severall holes in the bottom by w^{ch} the springs bubble up and fill it so as it alwayes runns over, notwithstanding the quantity dipp'd up in a morning which is the usual tyme the Company Comes, and the

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- A. The Public Walks.
- B. The Wells.
- C. The Chapel.
- D. The Market-place.

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nearer they drink it the spring y^e better, it being a spiriteous water that is ready to Evaporate if Carry'd any way, as has been try'd by weighing the water by the well and Carrying them but to y^e middle of the walks, it has lost of y^e weight, and much more the End of the whole walke: notwithstanding many has it brought to their Lodgings a mile or two off and drink them in their beds, nay, some have them brought to London w^{ch} is near 40 miles. They have the bottles filled and corked in the well under the Water and so seale down the Corks w^{ch} they say preserves it. They have made the wells very Commodious by the many good buildings all about it and 2 or 3 mile round which are Lodgings for the Company that drinke y^e waters, and they have Encreased their buildings so much that makes them very Cheape.

“ All people buy their own provision at y^e market w^{ch} is just by y^e wells and furnish'd with great plenty of all sorts. Flesh, fowle, and fish and in great plenty is brought from Rhye and Deale &c, this being y^e road to London, so all the season the water is dranke they stop here w^{ch} makes it very Cheape,

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as also the Country people Come wth all their backyard and barne door affords to supply them with, and their gardens and orchards, w^{ch} makes y^e markets well stored and provision Cheape, w^{ch} the Gentry takes as a diversion while drinking the waters to go and buy their dinners; it being Every day's market and runns the whole length of y^e walke, which is between high trees on the market side for shade, and secured wth a Row of buildings on y^e Right side, w^{ch} are shopps full of all sorts of toys, silver, China, milliners, and all sorts of Curious wooden ware w^{ch} this place is noted for, (the delicate neate and thin ware of wood both white and Lignum vitae wood):

“ Besides w^{ch} there are two Large Coffee-houses for tea, Chocolate &c, and two Roomes for y^e Lottery and hazard board. These are all built wth an arch or pent house beyond y^e shops, some of w^{ch} are supported by pillars like a peason, w^{ch} is paved wth brick and stone for y^e drye walking of y^e company in raine; Else the walke wth out w^{ch} is a Clay and sand mixt together. They have been intending to make it gravell w^{ch} would be much better. All those Conveniency's are added by y^e Com-

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payne's Contributions Every year—what has been, and so what will be. There is at y^e Lower End of the walke, w^{ch} is a broad space before you come to y^e walls of y^e wells, a Large sun-dial set upon severall steps of stone, thence you go straight along to a Chapple w^{ch} has been built by y^e severall Collections of y^e Company Every year; its a pretty place and Cost a great deal of money, and Every year there is a Contribution for y^e maintenance of a minister. There are severall buildings just about y^e Well where are severall apothecary's shops, there is also a room for y^e post house. The post Comes Every day and returns Every day all the while the season of drinking y^e waters is, from London and to it; Except Mondays non comes down from London; so on Satturdayes non goes up to London. You pay a penny Extra-ordinary for being brought from Tunbridge town w^{ch} is 4 mile distance, that being a post town, you likewise have the Conveniency of Coaches every day from London for 8 shillings apiece dureing the whole season, and Carriers twice a weeke.

“There are severall bowling greens about y^e wells, one just at it on Mount Sion and another up y^e hill called Mount Ephraim

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where is also a Large Chapple where the presbiterians have preaching: they have a minister w^{ch} by y^e Collections of y^e Company is also maintained all the winter to preach, as is the publick Chapple at the walks. There is severall other Bowling greens at a distance off a mile or two, fitted for Companys Lodging there, at Rusthall and Southborough; they have all houses to y^e greens, so the Gentlemen Bowle, the Ladies dance or walke in y^e green in y^e afternoons, and if wet dance in y^e houses, there being Musick maintained by the Company to play in y^e morning so long as they drink the waters, and in y^e afternoon for dancing.

“There are severall good taverns at the walks and all about to supply good wine and Brewhouses for beer and Bakers for Bread, but some of them Come from London and spoyle the market by raising y^e prices—so the higlers and Hucksters in a great measure.”

The royal visits to Tunbridge Wells, of course, attracted attention to the place, and many came to it to take the waters. Its name is to be found in the correspondence of the period. “Hoping you will not hold

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yourself too much disturbed by a letter of salutation," Viscount Chaworth wrote to Sir John Coke from there, July 13, 1634, "I shall advertise you herein that I found this place indifferent full of them that complain of several infirmities."¹ "It is many years ago," Sir Kenelm Digby addressed Sir Robert Harley, February 1, 1642, "since I was beholding to you for a medicine (of tincture of strawberries) for the stone, which first your brother my Lord Conway procured of you for me, and afterwards yourself gave me more particular directions for the making use of it; and truly, I have found more good in it than in any medicine I have taken, unlesse I should putte the constant yearly taking of the Spaw or Tonbridge waters under the tytle of a medicine." Not long after this was written, Edmund Waller, while staying in 1645 at Penshurst close by, in one of his poems to his "Sacharissa" (Lady Dorothy Sidney), who will not be kind to him, made the first allusion in polite letters to "The Wells":—

¹ *Hist. MSS. Com. Reports—Cowper MSS.*, II. 58.

² *Hist. MSS. Com. Reports—Marquis of Bath's MSS.*, II. 77.

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“To no human stock
We owe this fierce unkindness, but the rock,
That cloven rock produced thee, by whose side
Nature, to recompense the fatal pride
Of such stern beauty, placed those healing springs,
Which not more help, than that destruction, brings.”

It may perhaps here be mentioned that Tunbridge Wells does not reappear in poetry again until Congreve wrote the well-known lines on Miss Temple, afterwards Lady of Sir Thomas Lyttelton :—

“See near those sacred springs
Which cure to fell diseases brings,
(As ancient fame of Ida sings)
Three goddesses appear !
Wealth, glory, two possest ;
The third with charming beauty blest,
So fair, that heaven and earth confest
She conquer'd everywhere.”

CHAPTER III

THE COMPANY AT TUNBRIDGE WELLS IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

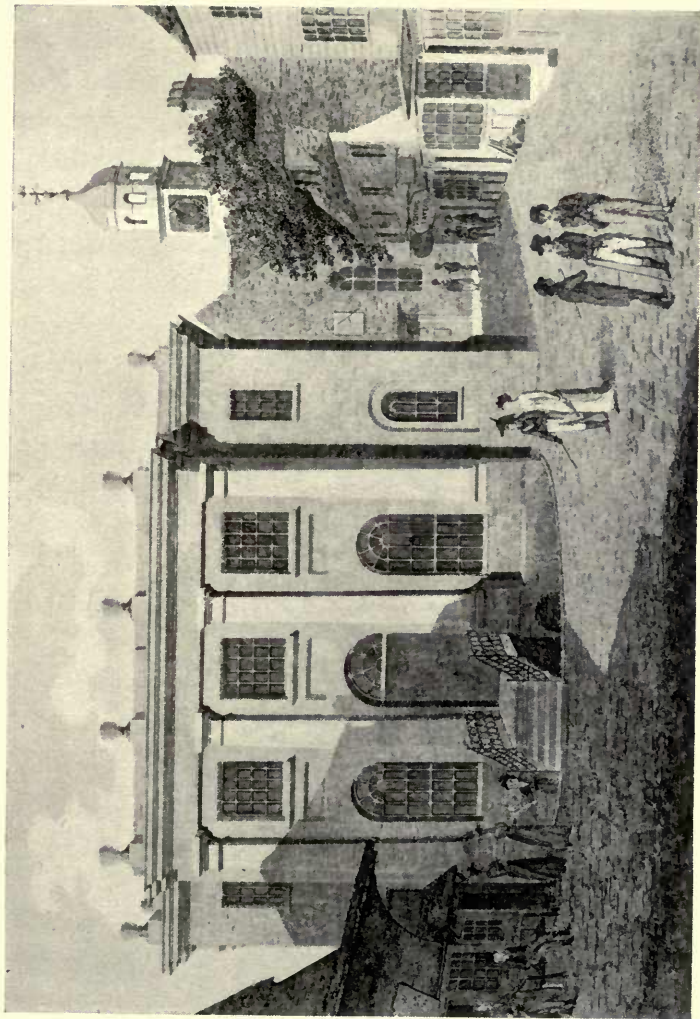
THE habit of leaving London for the summer months, which was already the vogue in the middle of the seventeenth century, as is indicated by the letter of the Duc de Cominges quoted on an earlier page, became, as the roads improved and travelling became a less uncomfortable business, more and more widespread among the well-to-do classes. "Tunbridge Wells, the Rendezvous of all the Gentry of the neighbouring County, and of the best Citizen Families in London," so John Macky described it in his *Journey through England*, published in 1714. "It is now a Rambling Time of the year, and the gentlemen being most of them gone out of town, Tunbridge and Epsom and such Places were full of people," Defoe wrote in *Moll Flanders* seven years later. "We are as full as we can hold; I don't doubt but Scarborough, Tunbridge, and all public

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places are the same," General the Hon. Sir Charles Howard, at Bristol, informed Lord Carlisle, in July 1753. "It is an age of diversion and not staying at their own habitations." "I am told that London was never so deserted," so runs another letter, written in August 1769. "Many of the foreigners are at Tunbridge Wells in search of society." Many authorities could be quoted in support of this view, but further corroboration is needless, since the fact is well established and generally admitted.

Bath had ample accommodation for the company that flocked thither in the winter, but Tunbridge Wells at the beginning of the century was not in the same happy position. Building, however, proceeded apace; and the erstwhile hamlet now spread into the parishes of Tunbridge and Speldhurst in Kent, and Frant in Sussex, the counties at this spot being divided only by a narrow shallow stream, described by Samuel Derrick in 1772 as "very dirty." Mount Ephraim and Mount Sion were, as Defoe says, "agreeably cover'd by good Houses, fine Gardens, and Fruit Trees," and numerous mansions and cottages were erected in the immediate vicinity of the Pantiles. All

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From a drawing by Paul Amsinck

THE BATH HOUSE

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went well until 1726, in which year there was much perturbation among a certain section of the inhabitants, for the building leases (to which reference has been made in the previous chapter), granted by the Lord of the Manor fifty years earlier, expired. The landlord claimed the buildings on his freehold, but the tenants, who thought themselves entitled to a renewal of the leases, retaliated by demanding compensation for the loss of the herbage of the waste of the manor, now covered by houses. The dispute might easily have been settled, but both parties assumed an uncompromising attitude, and recourse was had to the law courts. For years the litigation dragged on, and before terms were arranged more money had been spent than the property in dispute was worth. In the end it was adjudged that the Lord of the Manor was entitled to two-thirds of the buildings in question; the tenants, as remuneration for the loss of herbage, to the other third. The judgment may have been sound, but it was not at first sight easy to carry out. Of course the entire property might be sold, and the proceeds divided in the ratio declared; but a forced sale meant a heavy loss to the already impoverished

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suitors. An alternative was to leave the settlement to the courts, but neither party desired the delay and expense consequent upon such proceedings. In the end the matter was arranged in the most primitive way, by the drawing of lots. "All the shops and houses, which had been built on the manor waste were divided into three lots, of which the tenants were to draw one, and the other two were to remain to the Lord of the Manor," Hasted has recorded. "The lot which the tenants drew was the middle one, which included the Assembly Room on the public walk, which has since turned out much the most advantageous of the three." Finally, Maurice Conyers, Lord of the Manor, and the tenants, entered into an agreement by which the walks and wells were made open and free for ever to the public. This settlement was confirmed by a private Act of Parliament, passed in 1740, which may be called the Charter of Tunbridge Wells, for a restricting clause declared it illegal to erect any buildings on the Common, or, in short, to build on any spot wherever a building had not previously existed. "To this act," Amsinck rightly said in 1810, "Tunbridge Wells may be said to owe its continued pros-

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perity ; without it, it might have been increased by buildings, rivalling those of St. George's Fields ; and the houses tenanted by company issuing from the deserted brothels of the metropolis : but it would not have continued to yield attractions to the lovers of pure air and romantic scenery ; nor would it be distinguished, as is now the case, as the resort of the best and most accomplished families."

As the century progressed, travelling became less hazardous and less inconvenient, and this had the effect not only of increasing the influx of company, but in making it easier to put the market on a satisfactory footing. The market was established on the Lower Walk, and many visitors purchased their own food, so that the scene was often gay, and, probably, often amusing. The fresh-coloured Sussex saleswomen, in their high-crowned hats, made a pretty picture. "Provisions of all sorts [are] very reasonable," Defoe wrote. "Particularly they are supply'd with excellent Fish, and that of almost all Sorts, from *Rye*, and other Towns on the Sea-Coast ; and I saw a Turbut of near twenty Pounds weight sold there for three Shillings. In the Season of Mackerel, they have them here from *Hastings*, within three

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Hours of their being taken out of the Sea; and the Difference which that makes in their Goodness, I need not mention. They have likewise here abundance of Wild-Fowl, of the best sorts; such as Pheasant, Partridge, Woodcock, Snipe, Quails, also Duck, Mallard, Teal, etc., particularly they have from the *South Downs* the Bird call'd a *Wheatear*, or what I think I may call the English Ortolans, the most delicious Taste for a Creature of one Mouthful, (for 'tis little more) that can be imagin'd; but these are very dear at *Tunbridge*: They are much cheaper at *Seaford*, *Lewes*, and that Side of the Country." The Wheatear seems to have been regarded everywhere as a very delicious little bird. "They are as fine a morsel as the French ortolan, or Italian beccofico," says Samuel Derrick enthusiastically. "This bird is brought hither by the shepherds of the Sussex Downs, in great plenty, about the end of the harvest: the season for catching them is not more than three weeks. This is remarkable, that the wheatear is found in other parts of England, but everywhere, Kent and Sussex excepted, is as bad as a carrion-crow." Derrick has some further words of praise for the market, and declared the poultry to be the best in

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England, the mutton scarcely to be equalled and certainly not to be excelled, and the beef and pork to be incomparably good. His one ground of complaint was, that the vendors of provisions at Tunbridge Wells made strangers pay much dearer for them than the residents. This, however, was a custom at all seasonable resorts, and, in some places, is still continued. From the end of September until the middle of June it was possible to live there as cheaply as anywhere in the kingdom, for during this period a stranger scarcely ever ventured to put in an appearance at the spa : it was with the advent of the warm weather that the prices rose monstrous high. People of moderate means had the same grievance with the taverns, for the charges were very considerable during the season, which lasted about three months, and was only at its height for two months, during which time the tradesmen, proprietors of lodging-houses, and inn-keepers had to make profit enough to support them throughout the year. Yet for those whose means were not restricted the place was delightful enough. "In a word," Defoe summed up, "Tunbridge wants nothing that can add to the Felicities of life, or that can make a Man or Woman compleatly happy, always provided they have

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Money; for without Money a Man is no-body at Tunbridge, any more than at any other place; and when any Man finds his pockets low, he has nothing left to think of, but to be gone, for he will have no Diversion in staying there any longer.”

Before going further, a few lines may here, as well as in any other place, be devoted to the road. Tunbridge Wells is about thirty-six miles from London; thirty miles, by way of Uckfield and Lewes, from Brighton; and, from that rival spa, Bath, whence for so many years Beau Nash came, one hundred and forty miles. From the metropolis there were two highways, which seem to have been used one as much as the other:—

London		London	
Bromley . . .	10	New Cross . . .	2
Farnborough . . .	4	Eltham . . .	2
Sevenoaks . . .	9	Chislehurst . . .	3
Tunbridge . . .	7	Cray . . .	6
Tunbridge Wells	6	Wrotham . . .	7
—		Mereworth . . .	7
	36 miles.	Tunbridge . . .	8
—		Tunbridge Wells	5
		—	
			40 miles.
			—

Travelling, even in the middle of the eighteenth century, was far from pleasant, even for so short a distance. “The soil is either a

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light, white sand, very troublesome when there is any wind abroad; or a deep loamy earth, which horses can hardly drag through in rainy weather; nor is there any great pains taken with the roads: so that in winter you are in a manner cut off from an intercourse with society. Though there is a turnpike-road all the way from London, I cannot say much for the goodness of it: that which lies between this place and Tunbridge town, is kept in very bad order." Thus Samuel Derrick in 1762; but in a footnote, added five years later, he chronicles a marked improvement: "The turnpike roads from London to Tunbridge Wells are vastly improved since this letter was written. There are as fine roads made into Sussex and Surrey as a man would wish to travel; and two turnpike-roads have been laid out, according to Act of Parliament, to open a communication between this place and Bright-helmstone; which will be of the highest consequence to the two places." Even so late as 1800 Dr. John Evans mentions that he and a friend, going to Tunbridge Wells from Maidstone, were frequently compelled to alight from their one-horse chaise and to walk along the worst stretches of the road, in order to accelerate their progress.

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Some idea of the importance of Tunbridge Wells may be gathered from the fact that in 1685 Fleetwood Shepherd, writing to the Earl of Dorset so early as August 1685, mentions, "I am left on drye ground at Sennoch, seven Tunbridge coaches having passed this morning all full." It was not until nearly a century later, however—to be precise, on April 6, 1779—that Lord George Germaine, at Stoneland Lodge, could state that, "The post is so obliging as to come every day to Tunbridge Wells, which it did not do formerly till after the 27th of June." Seven years later, in Sprange's *Tunbridge Wells Guide*, the full coach service is set out:—

Tunbridge Wells Guide. 1786.

THE GOING-OUT AND COMING-IN
OF THE
STAGE COACHES,
WAGGONS AND POST.

PARMAN'S

Stage-Coach to London,

SETS out from *Tunbridge-Wells*, every Morning
at SEVEN o'Clock, (Sundays excepted) through

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Tunbridge, Sevenoaks, Farnborough, Bromley and Lewisham; and arrives at the *Golden-Cross Inn, Charing-Cross, London*, about Two in the Afternoon; and sets out from thence at SEVEN every Morning. The Fare to *Tunbridge-Wells* is 10*s*.—Each Passenger is allowed 14 lb. of Luggage; all above to be paid for at 1*d*. per lb. and so in Proportion for Passengers and Luggage to any Part of the Road. Out-side Passengers, and Children in Lap, Half-Price.

CHEESMAN'S

London Waggon,

Sets out from Tunbridge Wells, during the Summer Season, every Monday and Thursday Morning, about EIGHT o'Clock; and arrives at the *Old King's-Head Inn*, in the Borough of Southwark, every Tuesday and Friday about EIGHT o'Clock in the Morning; returns from thence on the same Evenings, and arrives at *Tunbridge-Wells*, Wednesdays and Saturdays. Carries Goods at per Hundred Weight; and Parcels book'd at the Inn in Southwark, and at his Warehouse, Tunbridge Wells.

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CHAPMAN AND BENNETT,

(*Late Camfield's*) *London Waggon*,

Sets out from Tunbridge-Wells, during the Summer Season, every Monday and Thursday Morning about EIGHT o'Clock; and arrives at the *Nag's Head Inn*, in the Borough of Southwark, every Tuesday and Friday, about EIGHT o'Clock in the Morning; returns from thence the same Evenings, and arrives at *Tunbridge-Wells*, Wednesdays and Saturdays. Carries Goods at per Hundred Weight; and Parcels book'd at the above Inn, and at Mr. *Bennett's*, the Duke of York, Tunbridge-Wells.

THE MAIL

Arrives every Morning from London about EIGHT o'Clock, (Mondays excepted) and goes out every Evening at Six o'Clock, except Saturdays. The Postage of a single Letter to, or from London, is *Four-pence*.

N.B. All *Foreign* or *Cross-post* Letters, are to be given to the person belonging to the Office, and not put in the Box, with the Letters

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for London; as Bags are made up, and Accounts kept respectively.

Letters for any Part of England, must pass through London, except to those Places which are mentioned under, and are in the Delivery of

THE CROSS POST,

Which sets out every *Wednesday, Friday, and Sunday* Morning, immediately after the Mail's Arrival from London, for, and arrives at the following Places the same Evening, viz. A Bye-bag is made up the same Evening, for *Tunbridge, Sevenoaks, and Bromley* Letters for which Places, and the Villages in their Neighbourhood, are within the *Cross-Post* Delivery, therefore will be delivered without first going to London, or paying otherwise then for *Bye, or Cross-Post* Letters.

To trace the further development of the coach-service is unnecessary. It was admirably conducted until the railway ran from London to "The Wells," when, of course, it gradually died out as the regular mode of conveyance, and was used only by those who

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loved driving for its own sake. Before leaving the subject, something must be said of the quaint custom of "touting," or "tooting," as it was perhaps in its original form; that is to say, waylaying travellers to the spas, in order to solicit patronage during their sojourn.

"Some sev'n or eight Mile off, to give you the Meeting,
Barbers, Dippers, and so forth, we send to you greeting.
Soon as they set Eyes on you, off flies the Hat :

'Does your *Honour* want this? Does your *Honour*
want that?'

That being a Stranger, by this Apparatus

You may see our good Manners, before you come at
us.

Now this, please your *Honour*, is what we call *Tooting*,
A Trick in your Custom to get the first Footing."

The custom was carried out particularly on the road to Epsom, where at a certain spot emissaries of the tradesmen at the watering-places would approach the travellers; and, though it has been suggested that the custom was called Tooting after the place, it seems to many authorities more probable that the custom gave the name to the place. Many will remember that "touting" is mentioned by Thackeray in *The Virginians*, on the occasion of Harry Warrington and Colonel

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Wolfe proceeding from Westerton to Tunbridge Wells :—" A pleasant afternoon brought them to the end of their ride; nor did any accident or incident accompany it, save, perhaps, a mistake which Harry Warrington made at a few miles' distance from Tunbridge Wells, where two horsemen stopped them, whom Harry was for charging, pistol in hand, supposing them to be highwaymen. Colonel Wolfe, laughing, bade Mr. Warrington to reserve his fire, for these folk were only innkeeper's agents, and not robbers (except in their calling)." As a companion picture to this fancy sketch may be given an extract from one of Derrick's letters written in 1762 from Tunbridge Wells :—" We were obliged to alight, about seventeen miles from London, at the top of a very steep hill, commonly called Madam's Scutt, perhaps a corruption of either Maiden's Court, or Morain's Court, the name of a neighbouring house. We walked down this hill to ease the horses, and had scarcely got into the carriage again, when we were alarmed by the appearance of two or three men well mounted, who, looking very earnestly in, passed us; then, returning full gallop, one of them rid up to the postillion, while the other endeavoured

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to make for the side of the chaise. Our fears, however, were soon dispersed, by the latter telling us he was the best butcher in Tunbridge Wells : the other proved to be a barber, who was endeavouring to secure management of our heads, in preference to the rest of his brethren of the bason. These gentlemen are very troublesome, if not intimidating ; for they have so much the appearance of highwaymen, that I should not be in the least surprised to hear that some one or other of them had been shot. The tradesmen of Tunbridge Wells, who use this silly practice, are called Tooters, or Touters, from the people of Tooting in Surrey, who set the example by way-laying the company formerly resorting to the mineral waters of Epsom Wells in that county.” So well established was the custom that it was celebrated in verse by an anonymous rhymster :—

THE TOUTING SONG

1.

“ SOME visit this Place for their Pleasure,
And some to recover their Health :
Some make it their Harvest of Treasure,
While others are fleec’d of their Wealth.



MRS. SARAH PORTER, QUEEN OF THE TOUTERS

[To face p. 80]

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But those who come here for Diversion,
I think 'em as much in the Wrong;
As those that expect a true Word,
From a *Lawyer's* or *Horse-dealer's* Tongue.

2.

“The *Touters*, before you're alighted,
Like so many *Myrmidons* swarm;
But you have small cause to be frightened,
Your Purses nor Persons they'll harm.
The *Barber* brags of his Performance,
He'll shave and dress Wiggs very well :
The Baker that serves him with Flower,
Says, no one can his Bread excel.

3.

“The *Farrier* advises plump *John*,
And whispers a Word in his Ear,
Sir, I shall be glad to drink with you,
I am the best *Farrier* here.
And while they are striking the Bargain,
Tom Ostler lays hold of their Padds,
Cries out, here's good Stabling and Feeding,
None like it in all the *Wells*, Lads.

4.

“The *Brewers*, the *Butchers*, and *Dippers*,
Are most of the clamorous Rout;
The *Pastry-Cook*, and the *Shop-keepers*
Are not unmindful to Tout :
But if unsuccessful in this,
To *Billingsgate* Rhet'ric they fall,
And would fain scandalize one another,
But that—they are Proof against all.

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5.

“ And when you’ve got rid of these Vermin,
And scarcely can get a Night’s Rest,
You are wak’d betimes in the Morning
With Musick that’s none of the best.
Two Fiddles, Bassoon and a Hautboy,
Would fright all the Devils in Hell;
And if, after this, you love Touting,
I heartily wish you farewell.”

Tunbridge Wells, as its fame spread, became less and less a health resort. Many still went to drink the water, of course, but the majority were drawn thither by the amusements to be indulged in, and by the opportunity offered to meet their friends. “ The place you are in has strangely filled your head with cures and physicians,” Mrs. Howard wrote to John Gray in the summer of 1723; “ but (take my word for it) many a fine lady has gone there to drink the waters without being sick, and many a man has complained of the loss of his heart, who has had it in his own possession.” “ When I came to the Wells . . . I found a great deal of good Company there,” Defoe recorded in the following season. “ The ladies that appear here, are indeed the Glory of the Place; the coming to the Wells to drink the Water seems to be little more than a mere Matter of Custom ;

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some drink, some do not, and few drink physically : But Company and Diversion is, in short, the main business of the Place ; and those People who have nothing to do anywhere else, seem to be the only People who have anything to do at *Tunbridge*."

That in the dawn of the eighteenth century the company was not all that it might have been there can be no doubt. In his play *Tunbridge Walks, or, The Yeoman of Kent*, played at Drury Lane Theatre in January 1703, Thomas Baker puts the following description into the mouth of one of his characters, Reynard, a gentleman who lives by his wits, in answer to the question, " What company does the place afford ? "

" Like most publick Assemblies, a Medley of all sorts, Fops Majestic and Diminutive, from the long flaxen Wig with a splendid Equipage, to the Merchant's spruce 'Prentice that's always mighty neat about the Legs ; 'Squires come to court some fine Town-Lady, and Town-Sparks to pick up a Russet-Gown ; for the Women here are wild Country-Ladies, with ruddy Cheeks like a Sevil-Orange, or gape, stare, scamper, and are brought hither to be disciplin'd ; Fat City-Ladies with tawdry

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Atlases, in defiance of the Act of Parliament; and slender Court-Ladies, with French Scarffs, French Aprons, French Night-Cloaths, and French Complexions. [Loveworth : But what are the chief Diversions here ?] Each to his Inclination—Beaus Raffle and Dance—Citts play at Nine-Pins, Bowls, and Backgammon—Rakes scour the Walks, bully the Shopkeepers, and beat the Fiddlers—Men of Wit rally of Claret, and Fools get to the Royal-Oak Lottery, where you may lose Fifty Guineas in a Moment, have a Crown return'd you for Coach-hire, a Glass of Wine, and a hearty welcome—In short, 'tis a Place wholly dedicated to Freedom, no Distinction, either of Quality or Estate, but ev'ry Man that appears well, converses with the best."

Allowance must, of course, be made for dramatic licence, but on the whole the picture is not far from the truth. Further, if Addison is to be believed, the manners of the visitors were singularly easy. There is in the *Spectator* of September 24, 1712, an amusing letter from Matilda Mohair to Mr. Spectator, wherein she complains bitterly of the wiles of the pert creatures at Tunbridge Wells, who attempt to attract the attention, and to win the hearts,

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of the male visitors. To all the usual tricks, which, indeed, were not peculiar to any one age or place, yet another was added, Miss Mohair complains, by “a set of familiar romps, who have broken through all common rules, and have thought of a very effectual way of shewing more charms than all of us.” “These, Mr. Spectator, are the swingers,” the indignant lady continues. “You are to know these careless pretty creatures are very innocents indeed; and it is to be no matter what they do for it is all harmless freedom. They get on ropes, as you must have seen the children, and are swung by their men visitants. The jest is that Mr. Such-a-one can name the colour of Mrs. Such-a-one’s stockings; and she tells him he is a lying thief, so he is, and full of roguery; and she will lay a wager, and her sister shall tell the truth if he says right, and he cannot tell what colour her garters are of. In this diversion there are very many pretty shrieks, not so much for fear of falling, as that their petticoats should untie; for there is a great care had to avoid improprieties; and the lover who swings the lady is to tie her clothes very close with his hatband, before she admits him to throw up her heels.” Such

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a letter was an outrage, and indignant replies appeared in the *Spectator* a few days later. Rachel Shoestring defends her sex with spirit, and says that Mrs. Mohair herself had been swung there, and that she had invented all this malice because it was observed she had crooked legs. On this latter point the writers of the other protests are all agreed. Sarah Trice mentions that Mrs. Mohair was in love with her father's butler; Alice Bluegarter that the lady "is with child, for all her nice airs and her crooked leg"—whether by the butler or another does not transpire. Looking beneath the surface of this fictitious correspondence, and making due allowance for Addison's playfulness, it may clearly be discovered that this gentle censor of morals thought that there was too much freedom between the sexes, and too much backbiting at this, as at other, fashionable resorts of the day.

The intimacy between the sexes at Tunbridge Wells may be traced to the fact that every one was entitled to know every one else. "There is as little Ceremony here as is at Montpelier," John Macky noted in his *Journey Through England*, in 1714. "You engage

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with the Ladies at Play without any Introduction, only they do not admit of Visits at their Lodgings; but every Gentleman is equally received by the Fair Sex upon the Walks." If all had been of the same station in life perhaps no harm would have come of this abandonment of convention; but that of course was not the case. "This Indistinction is attended with one Inconvenience," Macky continues, "that Sharpers, whose Trade it is to go Genteel, and with a Fine Address, mix themselves in all the Diversions here, and with their false Dice very often send People from the Wells sooner than they would otherwise go." Yet, according to the same authority, it seems that these folk could easily be identified. "These People are easily discover'd by their more than ordinary Assiduity to Strangers. They are the first that bid you beware of Sharpers, when they design themselves to pick your Pockets. All Shopkeepers are in Fee with these Fellows, and it is they who furnish the Dice for them." Yet, in spite of this warning, the rooks found their pigeons easily enough then, even as they do to-day when the Confidence Trick flourishes as serenely as of yore. An amusing story has been handed

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down to show how these folk, when they could not find victims elsewhere, were willing enough to prey on each other. About the year 1737, when gambling at "The Wells" was at its height, the notorious sharper Lawrence Sidney went there and became acquainted with one Jemmy Gilbert, another of the black-legged tribe, who had married the daughter of Vanderman, the owner of the Rooms on the Pantiles. Each was anxious to turn a dishonest penny even out of business hours, and at last Sidney was so fortunate as to find an opportunity to swindle his brother scoundrel. The incident is amusing enough to be recalled. One Okill, the eccentric clerk to the Chapel of Ease, kept a small lodging-house on Mount Sion, and, when it was to let, he always gave out the psalm which says, "Mount Sion is a pleasant place." This happened to be the case one Sunday when the two gamblers were at church. "Odds zounds," said Sidney, "poor Okill has not yet let his house." In the course of the week Gilbert heard that Okill's house was occupied, and he went at once to the clerk and begged him on the following Sunday to give out the same psalm. "No, sir, I never do that after I have let the house," Okill told him;

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but he gave way on receiving a small bribe. On the Sabbath when the psalm was given out, Sidney remarked that the house was not yet let; whereupon Gilbert declared he had heard it was. Sidney retorted that Okill's practice was to change the psalm when that was the case; Gilbert persisted that his information came from a reliable person. The two men squabbled, and at last Gilbert asked Sidney if he would back his opinion. "Yes," said the pigeon, "for ten guineas." The bet was made, and, of course, Gilbert won. The only doubtful part of the narrative is the chronicler's statement that Sidney paid. If he did, assuredly he shamefully outraged the conventions of his order.

Ten years after Macky's book appeared, Defoe took up the tale, and we find that a decade had made little alteration in the conventions, or lack of conventions, at the watering-place. Indeed, as the passage appears unchanged in the second edition of *A Tour thro' the Whole Island of Great Britain*, which was not published until 1738, for a decade we may read twenty-four years. "Here," says Defoe, writing at "The Wells," "you have all the Liberty of Conversation that can be

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desir'd, and any Person that looks like a Gentleman, has an agreeable Address, and behaves with Decency and Good Manners, may single out whom he pleases, that does not appear engaged, and may talk, rally, and say any decent Thing to them; but all this makes no Acquaintance, nor is it so taken or understood. If a Gentleman desires to enter into any particular Acquaintance, he must do it by proper Application, not by the ordinary Meeting on the Walks; for the Ladies will ask no Gentleman there to go off of the Walk, or invite any to their Lodgings, except it be a sort of Ladies of whom I am not now speaking. As for Gaming, Sharping, Intriguing, as also Fops, Beaus, and the like, *Tunbridge* is as full of these as most other publick Places." Yet, evidently, the conditions were improving, for, says Defoe, in conclusion, "A Man of Character and good Behaviour cannot be there any time, but he may single out such Company as may be suitable to him."

From these two chroniclers we of necessity derive our impressions of the spa, and both are agreed as to the licentiousness of many of the visitors and of their unquenchable desire to gossip. "I believe there is no Place in the

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World better to begin an Intrigue than in this," Macky declared; and turning to Defoe we find the following passage:—" *Tunbridge* also is a Place in which a Lady *however virtuous*, yet for want of good Conduct may as soon Shipwreck her Character as in any part of *England*; and where, when she has once injur'd her Reputation, 'tis as hard to restore it; nay, some say no Lady ever recover'd her Character at *Tunbridge*, if she first wounded it there: But this is to be added too, that a Lady very seldom suffers that way at *Tunbridge*, without some apparent Folly of her own; for that they do not seem so apt to make havock of one another's Reputation here, by Tattle and Slander, as I think they do in some other Places in the World; particularly at *Epsome*, *Hampstead*, and such like Places; which I take to be, because the Company who frequent *Tunbridge*, seem to be a Degree or two above the Society of those other Places, and therefore are not so very apt, either to meddle with other People's affairs, or to Censure if they do; both which are the Properties of that more Gossiping-Part of the World. In this I shall be much misunderstood, if it is thought I meant the Ladies only, for I must own I look

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just the other way; and if I may be allow'd to use my own Sex so Coursly, it is really among them that the Ladies Characters first, and oftenest receive unjust Wounds; and I must confess the Malice, the Reflections, the Busy Meddling, the Censuring, the Tatling from Place to Place, and the making havock of the Characters of Innocent Women, is found among the Men Gossips more than among their own Sex, and at the Coffee-Houses more than at the Tea-Table; then among the Women themselves, what is to be found of it there, is more among the Chamber-Maids, than among their Mistresses; slander is a meanness among Persons of Honour and Quality, and to do injustice to the Ladies, especially, is a Degree below those who have any share of Breeding and Sense: On this account you may observe, 'tis more practis'd among the Citizens than among the Gentry, and in Country Towns and Villages, more than in the City, and so on, till you come to the meer *Canail*, the Common Mobb of the Street, and there, no Reputation, no Character can shine without having Dirt thrown upon it every Day: *But this is a digression.*"

But even at the time when contempt was being showered upon the company, there were

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many distinguished visitors to "The Wells." The Duke of Marlborough went there from London on July 15, 1717, having on that day demitted all his employments under the Crown, and he and the Duchess stayed until August was far gone. The Duchess liked Tunbridge Wells as much as Bath, and frequently visited it, making herself with her autocratic airs about as popular at one place as another. She was on good terms with the equally autocratic Nash, and even deigned to consult him in certain matters; and when that potentate annexed this watering-place, she found in that fact an added attraction. Certainly she was there in July 1730 before the *Beau* became Master of the Ceremonies, and afterwards in August 1733, and during many other seasons she put in an appearance at the spa. Something of their squabbles is indicated on another page, but though they sharpened their wits on one another, it did not interfere with the regard and respect they entertained, the *Beau* for the Duchess, her Grace for Nash. Nash, indeed, was one of the few persons who could extract from her money for charity, the lady having little liking for such unprofitable expenditure. One evening when the great Master

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of the Ceremonies was collecting for the Bath Hospital, of which he was one of the founders and principal supporters, her Grace in vain endeavoured to escape him. Brought to bay at last, she said lightly, "You must put down a trifle for me, Nash, for I have no money in my pockets." "Yes, Madam, that I will do with pleasure, if your Grace will tell me when to stop," he replied; and, taking a handful of guineas from his pocket, began to throw them one by one quickly into his hat. "One-Two-Three-Four-Five——" "Hold! Hold!" cried the Duchess. "Consider what you are about." "Madam, consider your rank and fortune," retorted Nash. "Six-Seven-Eight-Nine-Ten." In vain the Duchess tried to speak: Nash would not allow her time to interject a word. "Pray compose yourself, Madam, and do not interfere with the work of charity. . . . Eleven - Twelve - Thirteen - Fourteen - Fifteen." The Duchess, now thoroughly alarmed, tried by force to stem the torrent of gold. "Peace, Madam," said the great man, with an air of severe dignity—and a twinkling eye, we may be sure; "you shall have your name written in letters of gold, and upon the front of the building, too. . . . Sixteen-Seven-



SARAH JENNINGS, DUCHESS OF MARLBOROUGH

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teen - Eighteen - Nineteen - Twenty." "I will not pay a farthing more," said the Duchess. "Charity covers a multitude of sins," Nash remarked imperturbably; "Twenty - one - Twenty - two - Twenty - three - Twenty - four - Twenty-five." "Nash, I protest, you frighten me out of my wits," the lady protested. "Lord! I shall die." "Madam, you will never die with doing good," he laughed. "And even if you do, it will be the better for you." He was about to plunge his hand into his pocket for more guineas, when the Duchess insisted that she should be let off with a donation of thirty guineas. She was, or pretended to be, very angry indeed, and when presently her persecutor came near the card-table at which she was seated, "Stand farther away, you ugly devil," she called to him, "for I hate the sight of you." Fortune favoured her at cards, happily, and she went to him later in the evening: "Come," she said, "I will be friends with you, though you are a devil; and to let you see I am not angry, there are ten guineas more for your charity." Then, overcome by the awful thought that this piece of generosity might bring other appeals on her purse, "But this I must insist upon, that

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neither my name nor the sum shall be mentioned."

John Byrom was at Tunbridge Wells in August 1723. "We walked upon the Walks; a great deal of company there; we had supper at the Glo'ster Tavern, Wheatears, &c. . . . 'Tis a very pleasant place," he wrote in his journal; and he pleased all students of life at the watering-places in the eighteenth century by composing *Tunbridgiala*, in which he described the customs of the day. In the same year John Gay went there to take the waters; and in the following season royalty again, for the first time in the century, was to be met with on the Pantiles. "I found a great deal of company there," Defoe wrote in 1724, "and that which was more particular, was, that it happen'd to be at the time when his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales was there with abundance of the Nobility, and the Gentry of the Country, who, to honour the Prince's coming, or satisfy their own Curiosity, throng'd to that Place, so that at first I found it very difficult to get a lodging. The Prince appear'd upon the Walks, went into the Raffling Shops, and to every publick Place, saw every thing, and let every body see him, and went away,

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with the Duke of Dorset, and others of his Attendance for Portsmouth; so in Two or Three Days, things return'd all to their Antient Chancel, and Tunbridge was just what it used to be." Royalty, this time in the person of the Princess Amelia, second daughter of George II, was again at "The Wells" in 1728, at which time Dr. Arbuthnot and Lord Boyle were there. The Archbishop of York was there in the season of 1729; and in the following year Lady Betty Germaine, the Duchess of Marlborough, and the Austrian Ambassador, Count Philip de Kinski, and his wife. Dr. Arbuthnot was again at Tunbridge Wells in 1731, and the Prince of Wales, with his consort, eight years later. The list might be expanded indefinitely, but enough has been said to show that if some of the visitors were undesirable, there were always present many of high social rank. Probably it was the different ingredients that made up the company that made the place so attractive.

Tunbridge Wells was at the zenith of its fame in the middle of the eighteenth century, by which time the accommodation for visitors was all that could be desired. "On Mount Pleasant stands a very noble house, which is

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let out by the season, by Mr. Grattan, the master of the Gloucester Tavern : It is the best lodging-house hereabouts, and was built by Lord Egmont, who, growing tired of the situation, sold it at a considerable loss. The Assembly-rooms, lodgings, and indeed all conveniences, were formerly not so good, nor anything like so neat, as they are at present. . . . There are apartments now to be found, even upon the walks, fit for people of the first fashion. Every body, who has seen the house of Mr. Baker, the bookseller, will allow of this.” Thus Samuel Derrick in his *Letters* of 1762; and four years later Burr gave similar testimony. “The place itself,” he said, “is now in a very flourishing state, with a great number of good houses for lodgings, and all necessary accommodation for company; its customs are settled, its pleasures regulated, its markets and other conveniences fixed, and the whole very properly adapted to the nature of a place, which is at once designed to give health and pleasure to all its visitants.” In consequence of the improvement of the place the flow of visitors increased yearly.

If Richard Cumberland, of whom something will presently be said, was *the* resident of

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Tunbridge Wells at the end of the eighteenth century, certainly Mrs. Elizabeth Montagu, "The Queen of the Blue-Stockings," was *the* visitor in the middle of that century. Year after year from 1745, almost without intermission, she came to take the water, staying from 1752 at the White Stone House on Mount Ephraim. Though she wrote to the Duchess of Newcastle, complaining, "These Houses at Tunbridge have so much the air of Inns, and the whole is such a scrambling life one feels oneself at rest very comfortably when one gets away," yet she was, to judge from the following encomium, very fond indeed of the spa.

Mrs. Montagu to Mrs. Anstey.

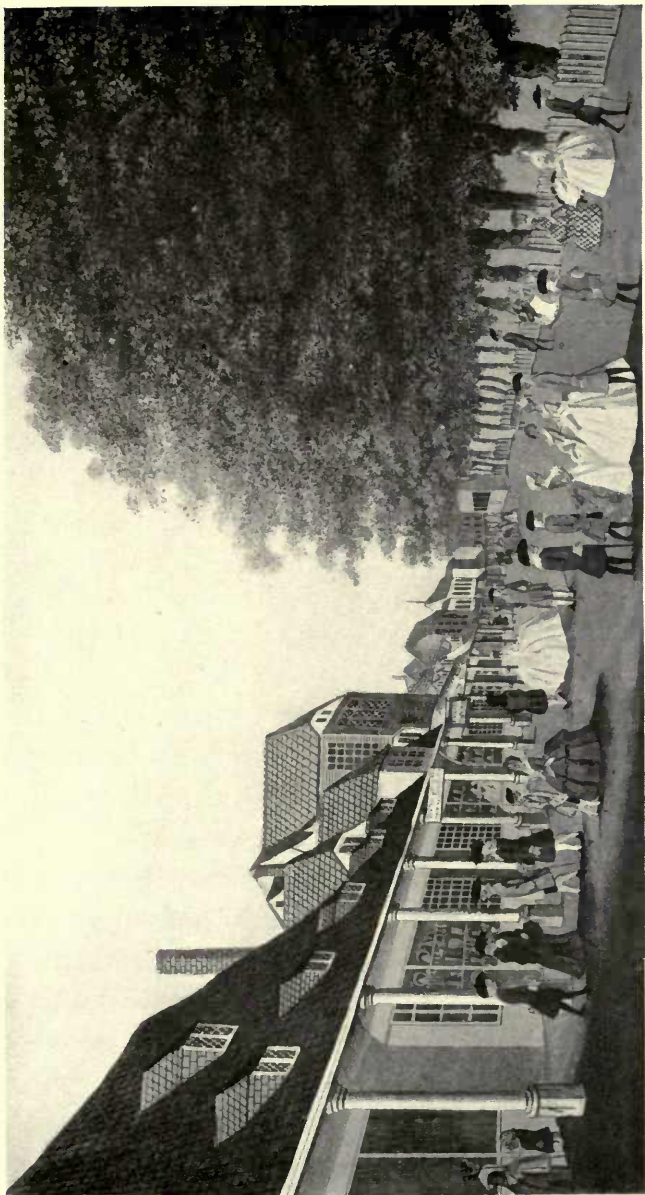
"Sandelford, 1749.

". . . Why hesitate a moment about going thither? The waters are good, the air incomparable, the place agreeable, and you cannot make a better summer's campaign. Rural and polite life are happily associated there; you may have the most retired, or the most public walks, as you are disposed; the variety of persons and characters make Tunbridge an epitome of the world. I am apt to

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regret the absence of those things which propriety endears, as one's house, gardens, &c.; otherwise I think Tunbridge life far from disagreeable. The reserve and gravity of our nation is less prevailing there than in any place where people are fixed in a domestic establishment, and have a little society of their own towards which they have so strict a fidelity as scarce to bestow a look or smile on a stranger; but in a place of this kind people easily enter into an acquaintance which they can drop at the end of the season, if it does not answer their expectations. You will see beautiful and romantic views; and the place which is now the resort of fine, gay, and polite people, seems designed rather for the retirement of savages, or sages petrified to savageness."

In the year before Mrs. Montagu so heartily recommended Tunbridge Wells, a sketch of the Pantiles was made by Logan. Logan was a celebrated character at "The Wells." It is said that at one time he had been dwarf at the court of the Prince and Princess of Wales, but in the middle of the eighteenth century he had settled at the watering-place, where he kept a shop at the far end of the Pantiles. He sold fans upon which he painted portraits, and these



From a drawing by Logan

THE PANTILES, TUNBRIDGE WELLS, 1748

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were much in demand, as also were his more elaborate drawings. This sketch of the company on the Pantiles in August 1748 is his best known work, and it was first published in Mrs. Barbauld's edition of Richardson's Correspondence, when it was labelled, "The remarkable characters who were at Tunbridge Wells with Richardson in 1748, from a drawing in his possession, with references in his own writing." In the picture we see Lord Harcourt and Colley Cibber about to accost Dr. Johnson and the Bishop of Salisbury; David Garrick talking to Mrs. Frasi; and Elizabeth Chudleigh walking with *Beau* Nash and William Pitt. The Speaker and Lord Powis are conversing with the Duchess of Norfolk, Miss Peggy Banks, Lady Lincoln, and Lyttelton; while close by is Richardson, and some way in the background a German baron who may be Pöllnitz; the Speaker's wife and daughter are chatting to Mrs. Johnson; and Whiston is in solitary communion, doubtless meditating upon the end of the world.

A group more representative of the company than that depicted by Logan could scarcely have been designed, but the artist omitted to insert in the gathering on the Pantiles any of the great leaders of fashion of the day. Happily

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Logan's picture has been supplemented by an admirable fancy-sketch from the pen of Thackeray, who in *The Virginians* sends Harry Warrington and Colonel Wolfe to "The Wells" to meet, among others, Lord March—not yet the "degenerate Douglas" of Wordsworth's scathing verses.

"There was, indeed, a great variety of characters who passed. M. Poellnitz, no finer dressed than he had been at dinner, grinned, and saluted with his great laced hat and tarnished feathers. Then came by my Lord Chesterfield, in a pearl-coloured suit, with his blue ribbon and star, and saluted the young men in his turn.

" 'I will back the old boy for taking his hat off against the whole Kingdom, and France either,' says my Lord March. 'He has never changed the shape of that hat of his for twenty years. Look at it. There it goes again! Do you see that great, big, awkward, pock-marked, snuff-coloured man, who hardly touches his clumsy beaver in reply. D——his impudence—do you know who that is?'

" 'No, curse him! Who is it, March?' asks Jack Morris, with an oath.

" 'It's one Johnson, a Dictionary-maker,

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about whom my Lord Chesterfield wrote some capital papers, when his dixonary was coming out, to patronise the fellow. I know they were capital. I've heard Harry Walpole say so, and he knows all about that kind of thing. Confound the impudent schoolmaster !'

" ' Hang him, he ought to stand in the pillory !' roars Jack.

" ' That fat man he's walking with is another of your writing fellows,—a printer,—his name is Richardson; he wrote *Clarissa*, you know.'

" ' Great heavens ! my lord, is that the great Richardson ? Is that the man who wrote *Clarissa* ' ? called out Colonel Wolfe and Mr. Warrington, in a breath.

" Harry ran forward to look at the old gentleman toddling along the walk with a train of admiring ladies surrounding him.

" ' Indeed, my very dear sir,' one was saying, ' you are too great and good to live in such a world; but sure you were sent to teach it virtue.'

" ' Ah, my Miss Mulso ! Who shall teach the teacher ?' said the good, fat old man, raising a kind, round face skywards. ' Even he has his faults and errors ! Even his age and experience does not prevent his stumbl—

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Heaven bless my soul, Mr. Johnson! I ask your pardon if I have trodden on your corn.'

" 'You have done both, sir. You have trodden on the corn, and received the pardon,' said Dr. Johnson, and went on mumbling some verses, swaying to and fro, his eyes turned towards the ground, his hands behind him, and occasionally endangering with his great stick the honest, meek eyes of his companion-author."

Though, as has been said, Tunbridge Wells does not figure largely in literature, nevertheless the place was the resort of a certain literary set, and especially of the Blue-Stockings coterie. Mrs. Donellan was there in 1743, and Mrs. Montagu on her first visit two years later had the pleasure of the company of Dr. Edward Young, the author of *Night Thoughts*, and she had an opportunity—of which she may or may not have availed herself—to bandy compliments with old Colley Cibber. Samuel Richardson came in 1748, and in a letter to Miss Westcomb recorded, with unusual humour, his impressions of the company. Whiston, the translator of Josephus, was there at the same time, and the divine and the novelist foregathered. Whiston was a frequent visitor to

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“The Wells,” and there in 1746 delivered his lectures on the models of the Tabernacle of Moses, and of Solomon’s, Zorobabel’s, Herod’s, and Ezekiah’s Temples; also reading to his audience Bishop Sherlock’s sermon on the late Rebellion, with a peroration of his own, which he piously preserved :—

“To conclude the whole, I must say, that tho’ I have been here a fortnight, and have seen several of this company, both Ladies and Gentlemen, at Prayers on the Week-Days, and a great number of them at public Worship on the Lord’s-Day, yet have I not seen any one of them at a Gaming-Table all this while. And I cannot but wish, heartily wish, that nobody else had seen any one of them at such a place neither. However, I venture to add this, which I desire you all to take special notice of, that if I be right in my calculation, as to our Blessed Saviour’s coming to restore the *Jews*, and begin the *Millennium* 20 years hence, I cannot but conclude, that after those 20 years are over, there will be no more an Infidel in *Christendom*; and there will be no more a Gaming-Table at *Tunbridge*.”

Johnson was the star of the season of 1748, though Richardson and David Garrick drew

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a certain amount of the public attention from him. "I go to bed at eleven, rise at seven, drink no malt, and think of nothing," the actor-dramatist-manager wrote. "Old Cibber is here and very merry we are. Mr. Lyttelton and I are cup and can. I played at E.O. and won. I don't dance, and eat like a ploughman." Gilbert West, the poet commemorated by Johnson, was at "The Wells" in 1751, and more than once afterwards. Dr. William King, the author of *Political and Literary Anecdotes of his own Times*, was there seven years later, when he met the famous oculist, "Chevalier" Taylor, whom, in common with the rest of the world, he dubbed "Charlatan." Taylor inspired many pasquinades, and was the subject of some verses at Tunbridge, in which the anonymous bard contrived to pay compliments to the reigning toasts :—

ON DR. TAYLOR

WHO CAME TO TUNBRIDGE WELLS IN THE YEAR 1758

"GREAT TAYLOR comes, loud RUMOUR cries :
Ladies, fear not he'll harm you;
Too full of arrows are your eyes,
He means but to disarm you.

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“ His touch glad CUPID’S case has hit,
Whom PEMBROKE’S form bewitches;
Ev’n FORTUNE can distinguish wit,
Who gives to —— riches.

“ O purger of the visual ray !
Enlighten still the nation,
That all may see, as clear as day,
The duties of their station.

“ So shall we praise thee to the skies,
Such wonders daily doing :
But dim the rays of POWIS’ eyes
Lest they should prove our ruin.”

About the same time another distinguished person was welcomed on her arrival :—

ON MRS. MACAULAY’S ARRIVAL AT TUNBRIDGE WELLS

FOR THE RECOVERY OF HER HEALTH, SAID TO BE MUCH
IMPAIRED BY HER HISTORICAL STUDIES AND WRITINGS

“ NYMPH ! of the sacred fountain here,
Thy speedy aid we all implore !
To *England* and to freedom dear,
MACAULAY’S precious health restore.

“ So if the Poet’s weaker strain
Shall fail to give thee lasting fame,
One touch of her historic pen
Shall then immortalize thy name.”

Mrs. Elizabeth Carter, of the Blue-Stocking

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coterie, went to Tunbridge Wells in 1761, eagerly looking forward to meeting her friend Mrs. Montagu. "How we shall enjoy ourselves!" she wrote from Deal, on June 27 of that year. "The very thought of it does me good; you may judge what I have to hope from the reality." Mrs. Carter and Mrs. Vesey—the latter once the object of Laurence Sterne's adoration—were there in 1775, and Mrs. Vesey again so late as 1787. In the following year Lady Anne Lindsay, the author of *Auld Robin Gray* was there, and was described by Sheridan's sister Betsy, who was at the watering-place with her father, as being "so bedevilled by dress, I should not have known her. She wore a thick muslin rondeau cap covering the hair, a 'Gypsy' hat of black and white chip circles, a black and white spotted petticoat, and over it a black cloth great-coat and a thin muslin neckerchief."

Malone was at "The Wells" in 1792, but the person next in importance to Johnson and Richardson in the literary hierarchy was Fanny Burney, who, in company with the Thrales, stayed there in October 1779, *en route* for Brighton. "The Sussex Hotel, where we lived," she wrote, "is situated at the

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side of the Pantiles, or public walk, so called because paved with pantiles; it is called so also, like the long room at Hampstead, because it would be difficult to distinguish it by any other name; for it has no beauty in itself, and borrows none from foreign aid, as it has only common houses at one side, and little millinery and Tunbridge-ware shops at the other, and at each end is choked up by buildings that intercept all prospect. How such a place could first be made a fashionable pleasure-walk, everybody must wonder. . . . Tunbridge Wells is a place that to me appeared very singular: the country is all rock, and every part of it is either up or down hill, scarce ten yards square being level ground in the whole place: the houses, too, are scattered about in a strange wild manner, and look as if they had been dropt where they stand by accident, for they form neither streets nor squares, but seem strewed promiscuously, except, indeed, where the shopkeepers live, who have got two or three dirty little lanes, much like dirty little lanes in other places." Miss Burney subsequently used her knowledge of the place to make it the background of some scenes in *Camilla* and *The Wanderer*. On Mount

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Ephraim, the scene of the accident in which Camilla's life is saved by Sir Sidney Clarendon, lived the Thrale's friend, Sophie Streatfield, a young lady who understood Greek, and of whom Mrs. Thrale was for a while jealous. "Mr. Thrale has fallen in love, really and seriously, with Sophy Streatfield," so runs a passage in *Thraliana*; "but there is no wonder; she is very pretty, very gentle, soft and insinuating; hangs about him, dances round him, cries when she parts from him, squeezes his hand sllily, and with her sweet eyes full of tears looks so fondly in his face—and all for love of me, as she pretends, that I can hardly sometimes help laughing in her face. A man must not be a *man*, but an *it*, to resist such artillery." Almost the only literary personage possessed of means to travel who never went to Tunbridge Wells was Horace Walpole, who, though in 1752 he lay a night at the neighbouring town of Tunbridge, did not think it worth while to go a few miles out of his way to view the fashionable resort where so many of his friends and acquaintances foregathered.

Royalty throughout the century continued faithful to Tunbridge Wells. The Princess

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FRANCES BURNEY, AFTERWARDS MADAME D'ARBLAY

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Amelia and Henry Frederick, Duke of Cumberland, visited it in 1762, and three years afterwards, rather late in the season, came William Henry, Duke of Gloucester, who, on his arrival, says a contemporary chronicler, was "welcomed by a triple discharge of eighteen pieces of cannon, and in the evening the Walks were most splendidly illuminated." In 1793 the Princess Sophia, daughter of the King, being in ill-health, stayed a while on Mount Pleasant, and in the next year the Duchess of Cumberland rented a new house in Vale Royal for the entire season. Frederick Augustus, Duke of York, with his consort, resided for a while in 1795 on Mount Pleasant; and soon after came His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, of whose visit all that has been recorded is that he walked upon the Pantiles arm in arm with the "Cabinet-Maker," Lord Thurlow. To give a list of less-distinguished visitors is unnecessary, since nearly every one in society sooner or later came to "The Wells." It may, however, be mentioned that the elder Pitt was there in 1753, to take the waters as a cure for insomnia, and again in 1767, being sent thither by Dr. Addington, because Bath was too far from London, and the Tunbridge waters might

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be expected to have the same effect. Of course the place was not to everybody's taste, and a few persons resolutely refused to visit it. "Lady Mary Cole writes me word she is better, but not well," Lady Dalkeith wrote to Lady Susan Stewart, July 6, 1760; "that Dr. Duncan advises her to go to Tunbridge, but she dislikes the place so much she does not think she can prevail with herself to go. I must say she will be very much to blame if she does not."

As the watering-place grew and flourished, it became little by little a residential town, and many of the houses, particularly on The Grove, became the homes of permanent tenants. Sir James Bland Burgess, a poet and dramatist, lived in one of the houses on the site of the bowling-green on Mount Sion, called Bowling-Green Houses, and about 1786 no less a person than Richard Cumberland settled down next to him. Cumberland House, Mrs. Pitt Byrne has informed us, was "a quaint old tenement, rather imposing from its dimensions and the site it occupied on the brow of the hill, standing back among the chestnut trees which overshadowed it, and railed off from the London turnpike road on the north side, opposite Culverdens."

Cumberland is to-day best remembered as a

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dramatist, but for some time he held appointments under Government. He was appointed, through the influence of Lord George Germaine, afterwards Lord Sackville, to the office of Secretary to the Board of Trade, and in 1780 was sent on a secret mission to Spain. On his return his office was abolished, and he was pensioned off with half his salary; and to make matters worse Lord North disallowed his claim of £4,500 expended during his mission. He had a large family to bring up, and it became necessary for him to retrench. It was no light thing for a man who had lived in the company of Johnson, Garrick, Dodington, Jenyns, and the wits of the day, to abandon the metropolis; but it was with a stout heart that he decided to give up the delights of town and settled in the country. "Tunbridge Wells, of which I had made choice, and in which I have continued to reside for more than twenty years, had much to recommend it; and very little, that in any degree made against it. It is not altogether a public place, yet it is at no period of the year a solitude.—A reading man may command his hours of study, and a social man will find full gratification for his philanthropy. Its vicinity to the capital

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brings quick intelligence of all that passes there : the morning papers reach us before the hour of dinner and the evening ones before breakfast the next day ; whilst between the arrival of the general post and its departure there is an interval of twelve hours ; an accommodation in point of correspondence that even London cannot boast of." So he wrote in his Memoirs, and further on in the same work he referred again to his residence at the spa. " More than twenty years I lived at Tunbridge Wells inhabiting the same house, and cultivating a plot of garden ground, embowered with trees, and amply sufficient for a profusion of flowers . . . : it was then, if only common justice had been rendered to me by Government, I should have enjoyed as much tranquillity and content, as can fall to the lot of imperfect man ; for my mind was emancipated from the shackles of office, and I seemed to have a property in the day, for which I paid no tax to business. Whilst I lived in town I had hardly ever passed a year without a long and dangerous fever, but in this salubrious clime I never once experienced so much indisposition as to confine me to my bed even for a single hour. In possession of a most excellent wife I had all

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the happiness that as a husband I could enjoy, and I had seen my eldest daughter Elizabeth married to one of the best and most amiable of men [Lord Edward Bentinck].”

Cumberland, though he had gone compulsorily into retirement, did not by any means become a recluse. “Fortunate as I accounted myself in my location at Tunbridge Wells, and gratified by the kindness and good will of the people,” he wrote, “I was not contented to reside in idleness amongst them, but in everything that concerned their interests, to the best of my power took an active part, and I flatter myself that some opportunities occurred when my zeal was not without effect.” He had been a captain of infantry in 1747, being in 1806, when he wrote his autobiography, “perhaps at this time the most aged field officer of volunteers in the kingdom”; and when he settled at “The Wells,” which was the head-quarters of one troop of cavalry and four of volunteer infantry, he took up a command during the war, and enrolled a company. What he most prided himself upon, however, was securing the ministry of the Chapel of Ease for that excellent clergyman, the Rev. Martin Benson.

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While at Tunbridge Wells Cumberland wrote many plays, and, as well as his autobiography, two novels and some poems. His output was very considerable, for it was with his pen alone he could keep the wolf away from the door. How near he was to beggary was never suspected, but when he died he left only £450. In connection with one of the plays written at Tunbridge an amusing story has been told. Cumberland in 1797 had promised Jack Bannister, the actor, to write for his benefit a comedy, into which songs should be introduced for Mrs. Jordan, and he wished Michael Kelly to compose the music. In order to settle various matters he asked Kelly and Bannister to pay him a visit. "As we were both interested in its success, we accepted the invitation," Kelly has written; "but fearing that we might not find our residence with him quite so pleasant as we wished, we agreed, previous to leaving town, that Mrs. Crouch should write me a letter, stating that Mr. Taylor requested me to return to London immediately, about some opera concerns; by which measure we could take our departure without giving offence to our host, if we did not like our quarters, or remain if we did." The precaution was not

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unnatural, when it is remembered that Cumberland sat to Sheridan for Sir Fretful Plagiary. The party consisted only of Cumberland and his wife, and Kelly and Bannister. The reading of the comedy, *The Last of the Family*, took place on the evening of the visitor's arrival, and it has been graphically described by the vocalist. "Five acts of a play, read by its author after *tea*, are at any time opiates of the most determined nature, even if one has risen late and moved little; but with such a pre-disposition to somnolency as I found the drive, the dust, the sun, the air, the dinner, and a little sensible conversation had induced, what was to be expected? Long before the end of the second act I was as fast as a church—a slight tendency to snoring rendered this misfortune more appalling than it otherwise would have been; and the numberless kicks which I received under the table from Bannister, served only to vary, by fits and starts, the melody with which nature chose to accompany my slumbers. When it is recollected, that our host and reader had served Sheridan as a model for Sir Fretful, it may be supposed that he was somewhat irritated by my inexcusable surrender of myself; but no, he closed his

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proceedings and his manuscript at the end of the second act, and we adjourned to a rational supper upon a cold mutton-bone, and dissipated in two tumblers of weak red wine and water.” So Kelly wrote in his autobiography. “ When the repast ended, the bard conducted us to our bed-rooms; the apartment in which I was to sleep, was his study; he paid me the compliment to say, he had a little tent-bed put up there, which he always appropriated to his favourite guest. ‘ The bookcase at the side,’ he added, was filled with his own writings. I bowed, and said, ‘ I dare say, sir, I shall sleep very soundly.’ ‘ Ah ! very good,’ said he; ‘ I understand you,—a hit, sir, a palpable hit; you mean being so close to my writings, they will act as a soporific. You are a good soul, Mr. Kelly, but a very drowsy one—God bless you—you are a kind creature, to come into the country to listen to my nonsense—*buonas noches!* as we say in Spain—good night ! I hope it will be fine weather for you to walk about in the morning; for I think with Lord Falkland, who said he pitied unlearned gentlemen on a rainy day—umph—good night, God bless you—you are so kind.’ ”

The next morning Mrs. Crouch’s letter

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arrived, and Kelly and Bannister informed their host that they must return early the following day. The news was taken in good part. "My children," said Cumberland, "I regret that you must leave your old bard, but business must be attended to, and as this is the last day I am to have the pleasure of your company, when you return from your evening's rambles on the Pantiles, I will give you what I call a treat." The guests were curious as to what the pleasure in store for them might be. Kelly thought it might be a special delicacy for supper, but Bannister was troubled with misgivings.

"On our return from our walk," Kelly relates, "we found Cumberland in his parlour, waiting for us. As I had anticipated, the cloth was laid for supper, and in the middle of the table was a large dish with a cover on it. When we were seated, with appetites keen, and eyes fixed upon the mysterious dainty, our host, after some preparation, desired a servant to remove the cover, and on the dish lay another manuscript play. 'There, my boys,' said he; 'there is the treat which I promised you; that, Sirs, is my "Tiberius," in five acts; and after we have had our sandwich

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and wine and water, I will read you every word of it. I am not vain, but I do think it by far the best play I ever wrote, and I think you'll say so.' The threat itself was horrible; the Reading sauce was ill-suited to the light supper, and neither poppy nor Mandragore, nor even the play of the preceding evening, would have been half so bad as his 'Tiberius'; but will the reader believe that it was no joke, but all in earnest, and that he actually fulfilled his horrid promise and read the three first acts? but seeing violent symptoms of our old complaint coming over us, he proposed that we should go to bed, and in the morning that he should treat us, before we started, by reading the fourth and fifth acts; but we saved him the trouble, for we were off before he was out of bed. Such are the perils and hair-breadth 'scapes which attend the guests of dramatists who live in the country."

Kelly seems to have regarded the evening's entertainment as a proof of Cumberland's self-complacency: others may see in it the dramatist's revenge for the treatment to which he had been subjected on the night of his guests' arrival.

Cumberland lived to the considerable age of
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seventy-nine, having survived the last of his friends. "I have followed Lord Sackville to his vault at Withyham," he had written sadly, five years before his death; "my lamented wife to her grave in the church of Frant; and there also I caused to be deposited the remains of William Badcock, husband of my second daughter Sophia, and father of five children, awarded to my care by Chancery, and looking to me for their education." Life had been hard upon him, and, though he had made a brave fight against adversity, it must have been with a feeling akin to relief that he sank into the grave. He died at Tunbridge Wells on May 11, 1811, but his remains were taken to London, and buried in Westminster Abbey. To commemorate his residence at Tunbridge Wells, Bowling-Green Houses was re-named Cumberland Walk.

From Cumberland's memoirs may be gathered some information about the visitors to Tunbridge Wells during his residence at the watering-place. "It was no common recommendation to a place of residence," he wrote, "where our summer society could boast of visitors so respectable as"—and here follows a list, including Lord Mansfield, Lord North,

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the Duke of Leeds, Lord Rosslyn, Archbishop Moore, and Dr. Moss, Bishop of Bath and Wells. In connection with the last-mentioned Cumberland has told a good story. The Bishop, who, with the dramatist, was dining with Lord Mansfield, mentioned that he was repairing an alms-house at Wells for the reception of five-and-twenty women, the widows of clergymen, and he asked Cumberland to suggest an inscription. "Why do you apply to Cumberland?" asked the Lord Chief Justice. "I'll furnish you with what you want: 'Here are five-and-twenty women, all *kept* by the Lord Bishop of Bath and Wells.' That's plain English. Cumberland would have puzzled the cause and his brains into the bargain." At this time Lord Mansfield was an old man, and H. Hobart writing to the Duke of Rutland in the autumn of 1786, after saying he had met his Lordship at "The Wells," continued: "His eye is particularly lively; but I am told he is very infirm, and not likely to live long." He survived, however, for another seven years. Lord North it was who had disallowed Cumberland's claims for the expenses of the Spanish mission, but when the veterans met at the spa they buried the hatchet.



Lord Chief Justice
MANSFIELD.

LORD CHIEF JUSTICE MANSFIELD.

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“ When I call to mind the hours I passed with Lord North in the darkness of his later days, there was such a charm in his genius, such a claim upon my pity in the contemplation of his sufferings, that even then, lacerated as I was in my feelings, I could not help saying within myself: ‘ The Minister indeed has wronged me, but the Man atones.’ ” Cumberland thus expressed himself in his autobiography: “ His house at Tunbridge Wells was in The Grove: one day he took my arm, and asked me to conduct him to the parade upon the Pantiles. ‘ I have a general recollection of the way,’ he said, ‘ and if you will make me understand the posts upon the foot-path, and the steps about the chapel, I shall remember them in future.’ ” Needless to say, Cumberland conducted his old enemy to his home. Lord North bore his affliction with fortitude, but he could not conceal his sadness. “ Colonel Barré,” he said, with pathetic humour, one day to that erstwhile doughty opponent of his, “ notwithstanding all that may have passed formerly in Parliament when we were on different sides, I am persuaded that there are not two men in the Kingdom who would be more happy to see each other.” The fourth

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Duke of Leeds, casually alluded to by Cumberland, visited Tunbridge Wells for ten weeks every summer during the twenty years prior to his death, which took place in 1789. He travelled in great state, and always arrived at "The Wells" wearing his star on his great-coat. He was a most hospitable man, and rarely sat down to dinner with less than six guests. At six o'clock every evening—he was the most precise person—his coach-and-six was brought to the door, and with his friends he would drive along the London Road to a certain place where the highway was broad enough for the ponderous vehicle to turn—with a poor attempt at humour he called the spot, "Turnham Green."

There were at "The Wells" many eccentric and curious characters. There was a little deformed man, called Lord Rawlins, the Cryer at "The Wells," who had been taken to London by the madcap Duke of Wharton, and introduced under that title to society and the clubs. He was remarkable for singing the Touting Song and for delivering some speeches about the place, taught him by his patron; but the unfortunate fellow became so proud of his title that he began to forget that he had no right

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to it; he assumed an immense dignity; lost his head; went mad; and died in the workhouse.

Another notorious person was Mrs. Sarah Porter, "Queen of the Touters," who died about 1762. When Nash first came to Tunbridge Wells, he brought this singular woman with him to collect the subscriptions of the company. "There was not a person of the least rank or credit she let escape," a contemporary has described her; "she pretended to know the fathers, mothers, uncles, aunts, and every relation of any persons of distinction; had a shrewd memory, and could recollect or forget whatever was for her interest; used to stand at the ball-room door, and make some thousand curtseys in a day; had not the least faith or inclination to trust; and if any individual did not immediately subscribe to her, she would take her book, pen, and ink, in her hand, and follow them all round the room when it was full of company, which made many of them often very angry; but rating, swearing at her, or any other severe method, was never known to put her out of humour, or make her uncivil to the company. The young folks would often teize her by calling to her, and letting her know there were two or three gentlemen, who they

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believed to be foreigners, had slipt by her up the Parade; when she would be in the utmost anxiety, and when they said to her, 'What are you so uneasy for, they'll soon be back again,' she would answer, 'I don't know that, for I have known more than one drop down dead before returning, and many that have slipt quite away.' "

A third extraordinary character at Tunbridge Wells was an old gentleman named Dunmall, who having devoted his youth to every kind of debauchery, had in later years become a religious maniac, and asserted that he lived under the direct influence of the Archangel Gabriel, by whose orders his every action was dictated. It was another of his delusions that he would never die, and that he had existed since the beginning of the world. Lord Chesterfield once asked him, "From the long time you have been in the world, do you remember or know anything of Jonah in the whale's belly?" "Yes, my Lord, very well," came the startling reply; "for I was with him, and a dark place it was; and between ourselves, for a prophet, Jonah was a great coward." On another occasion he went to the Sussex Tavern, and told Jack Todd, who had built

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the inn, that the Archangel had directed him to drink eighteen gills of white wine before he got off his horse. This injunction he carried out without hurt. A few days later he believed he was instructed to drink eighteen glasses of the water; but the consequence of this was a violent fever that confined him to his bed for some weeks. Meeting a pedlar on the road, Dunmall asked his name, and on being told, said, "Why, then, I have an order from the Archangel Gabriel to give you ten guineas." "Have you?" said the other. "Well, the same angel has blessed me with an order to receive it." Thus assured that there was no mistake, "The Prophet," as he was called, paid the money.

CHAPTER IV

BEAU NASH AT TUNBRIDGE WELLS, AND OTHER MASTERS OF THE CEREMONIES

To Tunbridge Wells in the earlier decades of the eighteenth century came many people, but not yet to any great extent fashionable folk other than those who wished to try the effect of the waters. The inhabitants desired that "The Wells" should be a resort as popular as Bath, but they had the good sense to realise that the place had no attractions to offer to persons in search of amusement and to see that they could achieve their desire only if these were provided. Not knowing how to set about this business, in their dilemma they did the wisest thing possible: they invited the King of Bath, the great *Beau* Nash himself, to accept the position of director of the town's entertainment. There was not a watering-place in England that would not have welcomed Nash in this capacity, and Tunbridge Wells regarded itself as peculiarly fortunate when

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RICHARD NASH, MASTER OF THE CEREMONIES AT
BATH AND TUNBRIDGE WELLS

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the great man condescended to accept its invitation. Probably no sum of money would have tempted the *Beau* to miss a single day of the season at his Somersetshire city he loved so well; but there the winter was the season, while visitors to Tunbridge Wells came only in the summer. He could, therefore, do his duty by both places.

Nash had been to Tunbridge Wells in his early days, as he once informed the company at Mrs. Evans's Coffee House, when the dissipated life he had been leading had temporarily undermined his health. "Nash," said Dr. Pellet, a physician practising at Bath, "you are really in a bad way, but as I know you have a good stamina, attentively follow the advice that I shall give you, and I have not the least doubt but you will recover:—you must immediately go down to Tunbridge Wells, and . . ." "Damn it," the *Beau* interrupted, "I cannot drink the Tunbridge Wells waters." "Softly, Nash," said the other. "I do not intend to prescribe them, but go down and get into one of the little houses upon Mount Ephraim, and follow the regimen I shall mark out for you for a few weeks, and, my life for yours, you will certainly recover." Nash

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obeyed the instructions, and as he did not drink the water, he attributed his recovery to the purity of the air.

It was a proud, as well as a fortunate, day for "The Wells" when, shortly before the beginning of the season of 1732, the fashionable dictator made his official entry into the town in his magnificent post-chariot, drawn by six greys, with outriders, footmen, French-horns and every other "appendage of expensive parade." For thus magnificently did he travel, abating naught of the dignity of majesty, save a military escort. It must have been a fine sight to see him arrive in full state, wearing the cream-coloured beaver hat, which singular head-covering he used, to give his own explanation, solely to prevent its being stolen.

Before describing the effect of Nash's influence on his new territory, something must be said of the man and his doings at Bath, for it was his position in the west that gave him the power to dictate in the east. Further, at "The Wells" he merely put into practice, with such variations as were essential owing to the differences between the places, the ordinances he had imposed on the city on the banks of the Avon.

Beau Nash at Tunbridge Wells

“My father was a Welsh gentleman, my mother niece to Colonel Poyer, who was murdered by Oliver for defending Pembroke. I was born October 18, 1674, in Swansea, Glamorganshire.” So runs the only scrap of autobiography left behind him by Richard Nash. Nash the elder, a partner in a glass manufactory, was in circumstances sufficiently easy to send his son, first, to the Carmarthen Grammar School, and then to Jesus College, Oxford, at which latter place, Goldsmith states, “he showed that though much might be expected from his genius, nothing could be hoped from his industry.” It is not clear whether he left the university of his own accord or at the express wish of the authorities; but he came down without taking a degree or discharging certain debts he had contracted. He was allowed to have his way and enter the army; but his father, having purchased for him an ensigncy, could not make him an allowance sufficient to enable him to indulge his tastes. After a short time, therefore, the young man sold his commission and went back for a while to the paternal roof; emerging again in 1693 to go to London, where he entered himself as a student at the Middle

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Temple. He learnt little law, but made himself well acquainted with the pleasures of the town, though neither his social position nor his means enabled him to mix in the company he would have chosen. "Though very poor, he was very fine : he spread the little gold he had in the most ostentatious manner, and though the gilding was but thin, he laid it on as far as it would go," Goldsmith described him at this period of his life. "Those who know the town cannot be unacquainted with such a character as I describe; one who, though he may have dined in private upon a banquet served cold from a cook's shop, shall dress at six for the side box; one of those whose wants are only known to their laundress and tradesmen, and their fine clothes to half the nobility; who spend more in chair hire than in house-keeping, and prefer a bow from a lord to a dinner from a commoner." In other words, Nash was a pinchbeck dandy, usually the most contemptible of beings, yet not so, perhaps, in this case, for, curiously enough, the life he led, though degrading, did not degrade him. He lived, it is fair to surmise, in the clouds, weaving fancy pictures of the day when he would meet "the best

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people " on equal terms. It was not a lofty dream, indeed, but it served to save his self-respect. A man, it may be said, suffers or gains in character, not so much by what he does as by what he feels regarding his actions. Nash did not consider that there was anything derogatory in his desire to mix with the fashionable world : to do him justice, when he met any member of that world, even in the days of his utmost poverty, he was not servile, rather was he patronising, he who was presently to hold his own against a princess and browbeat duchesses.

Nash might have led this life so long as his father would support him in what to that parent must have seemed inglorious idleness, and then he would have gone under. Before that inauspicious day arrived, kindly fortune, that seems to reward those who rely upon it improvidently, befriended him. In honour of the accession of William and Mary, the Inns of Court decided to revive the ancient revels that had been discontinued for many years, and Nash was appointed to organise the pageant. This he did very successfully. Indeed, the King was so well entertained that he proposed to bestow upon Nash the honour of

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knighthood. "Please your Majesty," said the almost penniless *Beau*, "if you intend to make me a knight, I wish it may be one of your poor knights of Windsor, and then I shall have a fortune at least able to support my title." It is said that Nash, who as an unknown man refused the offer of knighthood from King William, declined at the zenith of his fame a similar honour at the hands of Queen Anne, lest, as the story goes, "Sir William Read, the mountebank, who had just been knighted, should call him brother." But as Sir William Read was knighted in 1705, the year in which Nash first went to Bath, the latter story is almost undoubtedly apocryphal, and is only given here because it is characteristic of the man.

Upon what Nash did in the long tale of years between the Temple pageant and his arrival at Bath, not even his earliest biographer, no less important a contemporary than Oliver Goldsmith, can throw any light. Rumour declares that he had many adventures, and probably rumour in this case did not lie. Currency has been given to one of these adventures. It is related that he was invited to dine on board a man-of-war under sailing

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orders, that he drank deep, fell asleep, and awoke to find himself at sea. He asserted that, while he was on board, the ship engaged in action, that a friend was killed at his side, and that he himself was wounded in the leg. Nash, years later, was telling this story to some ladies at Bath, when the Duchess of Marlborough expressed her conviction that the wound must be in the back, for she was sure he had too much modesty to look his enemies in the face. The Master of the Ceremonies particularly disliked any doubt to be cast on his yarns, and he effectually silenced her Grace. "I protest, Madam, it is true," he said; "and if it cannot be believed without further information, you may, if you please, feel the ball in my leg." There is nothing inherently improbable in the incident, but it would be a bold man who would believe any of Nash's yarns. He was, indeed, given, especially as he grew old, to drawing the long bow, and on one occasion a naval captain clearly showed his disbelief in the tale that the *Beau* had just unfolded. "And so you won't believe this?" said the great man angrily. "Why, yes, I will, Nash, to oblige you," said the seaman; "but I would not believe such

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another damned lie for any other man on the face of the earth.”

How Nash lived during these years is another problem, but this may be met with the surmise, either that his father continued to make him an allowance, or that his father died and left him a small capital that slowly but surely—and perhaps not so very slowly—he dissipated. Certainly what benefit he derived from the direction of the Temple pageant was purely social: it seems to have brought him into touch with the more fashionable class of men about town, an opportunity that doubtless he felt amply repaid him for his labours. To some extent, perhaps, he eked out his income by means of his wits, which apparently served him passing well, since there is no record of his ever having done a day’s work before he went to Bath.

It is said he often made money through winning some of those extraordinary wagers that were then so popular. He is said to have acquired a small fortune, and greatly to have enhanced his reputation, by riding, attired in the costume of Lady Godiva, a cow through a village. On another occasion, when he had lost his last penny at the York races, his friends

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bet him fifty pounds that he would not stand, wrapped only in a blanket, at the great door of the Minster as the people were coming out from a service. Nash, of course, won the fifty pounds, and, incidentally, scored off his friends, for the Dean, who knew him, saw him and exclaimed, "What, Mr. Nash in masquerade?" "No, Mr. Dean," he said, pointing to the other culprits, who were watching close by, "only a Yorkshire penance for keeping bad company."

Tradition has it that during the years he was in the town he was addicted to gambling, and, further, that at that congenial pastime he was fortunate. He was, it is said, a daring player, and as there never was a successful gambler who lacked courage and audacity this may be accepted; but the only story that has been handed down of him at the card-table shows him not to have been entirely reckless. He had been playing with a party of friends at a tavern, and at a very late hour some one proposed to have one more game, the stakes to be four bottles of wine "for the good of the house." "I'll tell you what," said Nash, rising from his seat, and pointing to the clock, "you may do as you please, but for the good of *my* house I am going home."

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Bath, when Nash first went there, was already on the way to become a popular resort. A few years before, the Duke of Beaufort, whose Somersetshire seat, Badminton, was about fourteen miles away, had interested himself in the city, and, amongst other things, induced the Corporation to grant the use of the Town Hall for balls, which hitherto had been held on the bowling-green. A great nobleman, however, could not be expected to devote his time to the organisation of amusements, and the Corporation thought it well to appoint for that purpose a Master of the Ceremonies, an office that had been long in abeyance. The choice fell upon a Captain Webster, who may have been the man of that name introduced by Theophilus Lucas in his *Lives of the Gamblers*. Webster, of whom little is known, was described as "a man of spirit and address," with a thirst for gaming, which he encouraged in the city over which he ruled. In the absence of any contemporary portrait of social Bath at this time, it is, perhaps, permissible to give, for what it is worth, the fancy picture presented by Peach in his interesting article on *Bath in the Days of Fielding and Smollett*—

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“ You see that middle-sized man at the end of the tent (in the Bowling Green) on a slight elevation, under a canopy of common material ; he is dressed in a square-cut coat, a vast neckerchief, tied in a vast bow, much frilled in the centre ; his legs are encased in breeches or pantaloons of a dark material, over which are drawn top-boots,” he wrote. “ That gentleman is Captain Webster. As he moves, you perceive he falters a little—yes, he has been drinking, but he swaggers and brings his feet down as if all his enemies were there, and he is resolved to crush them by the concentrated vigour of his boot-heels. He arranged his forces—men and women—the former arrayed very much like himself, their features being painted by the same artist who has done such justice to their leader—the brandy bottle ; the latter resemble that licentious queen whose reputation was immoral, and whose evil deeds brought her, where it will bring many of those excited painted beauties—to the dogs. The two musicians strike up and the dance begins, and, as you observe, magnanimous readers, no one ever witnessed such an exhibition of frantic energy, kicking up of legs, swaying of arms, and stamping of feet to the tune of the

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fiddle and the clarionet. I can find but one expression to describe the scene—it was a moral vertigo.”

It was the desire to try their luck at the tables which Webster had set up that induced Nash and some of his friends to go to Bath during the season of 1705. His good fortune did not desert him: he won, it is said, a thousand pounds at gaming, and became so intimate with the Master of the Ceremonies that he sometimes acted as deputy for that official. Nash's star was clearly in the ascendant, for Webster was killed in a duel: whereupon the Corporation invited Nash to become King of Bath. He who had gone to the Somersetshire watering-place for a few weeks' frolic, remained to rule over it as unquestioned autocrat for nearly three-score years.

Elsewhere the present writer has traced at length the development of Bath under *Beau* Nash, and shown how licence was exchanged for decorum, and courtesy replaced boorishness. One of the first innovations introduced by the new Master of the Ceremonies was to order the bells to peal to announce the arrival of new-comers, and the band presently to serenade them: a custom humorously

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described by Christopher Anstey in *The New Bath Guide*—

“No city, dear Mother, this city excels
In charming sweet sounds both of fiddles and bells;
I thought, like a fool, that they only would ring
For a wedding, or judge, or the birth of a King;
But I found 'twas for me that the good-natured
people
Rung so hard that I thought they would pull down the
steeple;
So I took out my purse, as I hate to be shabby,
And paid all the men when they came from the
Abbey;
Yet some think it strange they should make such a
riot
In a place where sick folk would be glad to be quiet;
But I hear 'tis the business of this corporation
To welcome in all the great men of the nation;
For you know there is nothing diverts or employs
The minds of great people like making a noise;
So with bells they contrive all as much as they can
To tell the arrival of any such man.
If a broker, or statesman, a gamester, or peer,
A naturalised Jew, or a bishop, come here,
Or an eminent trader in cheese should retire
Just to think of the business the State may require;
With horns and with trumpets, with fiddles and drums,
They'll strive to divert him as soon as he comes.
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And music's a thing I shall truly revere,
Since the city musicians so tickle my ear:
For when we arrived here at Bath t'other day,
They came to our lodgings on purpose to play.”

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Nash improved the orchestra, assumed control of the Assembly-rooms, organised the entertainments, and issued his famous code of

RULES TO BE OBSERVED AT BATH

1. That a visit of ceremony at first coming and another at going away, are all that are expected or desired, by ladies of quality and fashion—except impertinents.

2. That ladies coming to the ball appoint a time for their footmen coming to wait on them home, to prevent disturbance and inconvenience to themselves and others.

3. That gentlemen of fashion never appearing in a morning before the ladies in gowns and caps, show breeding and respect.

4. That no person take it ill that any one goes to another's play, or breakfast, and not theirs;—except captious by nature.

5. That no gentleman give his ticket for the balls to any but gentlewomen. N.B.—Unless he has none of his acquaintance.

6. That gentlemen crowding before the ladies at the ball, shew ill manners; and that none do so for the future—except such as respect nobody but themselves.

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7. That no gentleman or lady takes it ill that another dances before them; except such as have no pretence to dance at all.

8. That the elder ladies and children be content with a second bench at the ball, as being past or not come to perfection.

9. That the younger ladies take notice how many eyes observe them. N.B.—This does not extend to the *Have-at-alls*.

10. That all whisperers of lies and scandal be taken for their authors.

11. That all repeaters of such lies and scandals be shunn'd by all company—except such as have been guilty of the same crime.

N.B.—Several men of no character, old women, and young ones of questioned reputation, are great authors of lies in these places, being of the sect of levellers.

To these rules he added another, more important than the rest, whereby he forbade the wearing of swords within his domain. “This was perhaps the beginning of a change in fashion which appears to have been general in 1780,” Lecky, in his *History of England in the Eighteenth Century*, paid tribute to the

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Beau, “ and which has a real historical importance as reflecting and sustaining the pacific habits that were growing in society.” His legislation, in other ways, tended to eradicate the distance between the various classes of folk who went to Bath. Then, the upper classes and the wealthy citizens formed two camps, entirely independent of each other. This, clearly, did not make for sociability, and Nash devoted all his energies to breaking down these barriers. He made aristocrat and democrat dance together : he broke down at least the outer barriers that had been erected. The consequence of his action was more far-reaching than probably he ever dreamt, and some sociologist of the future may find in it one of the first movements towards the more sympathetic attitude subsequently held by those born in the purple towards those less fortunately placed in society.

Nash did not, of course, become omnipotent without some trouble, but from the first he was very firm, and would tolerate no infringement of his regulations. “ Mr. Nash,” wrote the author of *The Life of Timothy Ginnadrake*, “ never suffered any of the company to make innovations in the amusements, nor the band

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of music to be under their awe and direction. They were *his* servants; *he* was their patron." When the Duchess of Queensberry appeared at a ball wearing a white apron, he took it off and threw it on a bench, remarking quietly, "None but Abigails appear in white aprons." When a man one evening entered the Rooms in the costume he had worn on the road, booted and spurred, with a whip in his hand, Nash went up to him, bade him welcome, and begged humbly to remind him of something he had forgotten. The visitor innocently asked what it was. "Why, sir," replied Nash, "I see you have got your boots and spurs, and whip, but you have unfortunately left your horse behind." Not even royalty could induce him to make an exception in its favour. It was his rule that all entertainments should cease at eleven. When Princess Amelia, the autocratic daughter of George II, was there, she did not wish the ball to cease at that hour and asked for one more dance, adding, when Nash looked at her with well-feigned amazement, "Remember, I am a Princess." "Yes, Ma'am," he replied; "but *I* reign here, and *my* laws must be kept."

Doubtless his treatment of royalty, aristo-

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crat, and commoner alike, had much to do with securing him the undoubted authority he soon came to possess. To him, however, it seemed natural that he should behave to all in the same manner, for he took himself seriously. He was in consequence treated as what he claimed to be, the absolute ruler of Bath. Of course, not the stern justice he administered, backed as it was by his audacity and an amazing insolence, could have made his position firm; but it was impossible not to like the man, who, with all his faults, had a sincere belief in his mission, invariable high spirits, an imperturbable good temper, a kindly heart, a great generosity, and a certain dignity. He was a fop, but a fop who knew how to make himself respected. “You, Sir, in a free country,” wrote the anonymous author of *Characters at the Hot-Well, Bristol, in September, and at Bath, in October, 1723*, “enjoy a Power that is wholly despotick, and reign in your respective territories without controul. Your Word is the Law; and whatever Mr. Nash pleases to order, every one submits to with the same Pleasure and Resignation, as if done by his own private Authority. This, Sir, before your Time no one could think would ever



PRINCESS AMELIA

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happen, nor is it likely that after your Demise we shall ever see it again.”

Under the rule of Nash Bath soon became a place of great social importance in the kingdom, second only to the metropolis. What he had done for that city, most people believed he could effect elsewhere, and the other watering-places put themselves under his suzerainty. Only Epsom showed itself independent and elected its own monarch, and Derby, which had a code of its own for its Ladies' Assemblies. So great was the *Beau's* fame that there was but a little exaggeration, and that little entirely good-natured, in the dedication to him, by the anonymous author of the already mentioned *Characters at the Hot-Well . . . and at Bath*—

“When a Man writes the History of a Country, who is so proper a Patron for it as the Prince who governs it? And when one writes *Characters* at Bath, who is so proper a Patron for such a Piece as *yourself*, under whose Protection there is so great Security, and in Shelter of whose Power so many who come there think themselves so happy? Nor will it, I hope, be thought improper that I give you the Patronage of the Frequenters of the Hot-Well (at Bristol) too. Kings, Sir, are as

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much Sovereigns in their Principalities as in their Kingdom : the Power is equal, though their Titles are not. So, Sir, though with respect to the greater number of your Subjects you are King in Bath, you may be styled Prince at the Hot-Well, Duke at Tunbridge, Earl in Scarborough, not to mention four Lordships of Buxton, and your own kindred's famous Place of Resort, St. Winifride's Well : They all acknowledge you for their Chief ; and though some of these lesser of your States, like other Princes of a higher Name, you may never favour with your Presence, and others rarely, yet all feel and acknowledge the benign Influence of your Authority."

Tunbridge Wells had the advantage of Bath only in being nearer London. It lacked the old-world air of the Somersetshire town, with its Bladudian legend and a history dating from the days of Julius Cæsar ; nor had it architectural beauties equal to the magnificent Abbey Church and the splendid Roman Bath. Wanting, too, at the Kentish spa was the social prestige that Bath had gained during the quarter of a century that Nash had ruled. It was, indeed, as crude in its habits as Bath had been in 1705. " Before that famous arbitrator

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of pleasure arose to plan and improve the amusements of the great," Burr wrote in his history of Tunbridge Wells, "public places, but little esteemed in themselves, were only resorted to by invalids, to whom their medicinal waters were necessary; and, as the manners of that age were far removed from that easy politeness and refinements of behaviour which distinguishes the present, the company was generally disunited and unsocial, consequently the pleasures to be found amongst them were neither elegant nor diverting." It was to change this state of things that Nash laboured: to attract to "The Wells" the fashionable folk who were not drawn there by the springs, and to induce the different classes of society that assembled there to unite and make a body willing to amuse itself.

Nash at once made his presence felt at Tunbridge Wells, and in a very short time ruled the town with a hand as firm as that with which he controlled the destinies of Bath. "Tunbridge Wells, in common with Bath," wrote Burr, a few years after the *Beau's* death, "owes the present agreeable and judicious regulation of its amusements, to the skilful assiduity of the celebrated Mr. Nash, who first

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taught the people of fashion how to buy their pleasures, and to procure that ease and felicity they sought for, without diminishing the happiness of others." Of course, at first there was opposition, as in the early days of his rule in the west, but there were few who attempted to stand up to him, and his rough-and-ready wit usually gave him the advantage in any verbal encounter. Once, at "The Wells," a lady asked him whose child he was, and before he could reply, a young nobleman remarked, "Nash is the child of Chance, who left him to be nursed by Folly, and he has been always maintained at the expense of the public." There was enough truth in this sally to cause a laugh; but Nash only whistled. Asked why he did so, "I always whistle," he made answer, "when his Lordship's led-captain is absent, so that the company may know when he has said a good thing." Far better, and more dignified was his retort to Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough, when she rallied him upon his obscure origin, and compared him to Gil Blas, who was ashamed of his father. "No, Madam," he said splendidly, "I seldom mention my father in company, not because I have any reason to be ashamed of him, but because

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he has some reason to be ashamed of me.” Opposition soon died away, and Nash then justified the lines in the epitaph which Dr. King wrote upon him—

“ To his empire also was added,
By the consent of all orders,
A celebrated province
Which he ever swayed with great prudence,
Not by delegated power, but in person.
He designed to visit it every year,
And while the necessities of State demanded his presence,
He usually continued there.”

Nash introduced into the Kentish watering-place the regulations that he had imposed upon the inhabitants of the city on the banks of the Avon. He forbade the wearing of swords. He made arrangements whereby all visitors were welcomed on their arrival with the pealing of bells, and then by the band, which played under their windows. Whereby hangs a good tale, which may be told here, though the incident did not occur until some years after the *Beau's* death. The lilliputian Lady Newhaven, on the occasion of her first visit, begged Mrs. Vesey to tell her all about the customs of the spa. While they were conversing, a man in the street began ringing

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a bell. "Why does he do that?" Lady Newhaven asked. Her cicerone answered, "To notify your arrival." At that moment the man stopped ringing, and shouted: "At one o'clock, at Mr. Pinchbeck's great room, will be shown the surprisingly tall woman."

Nash always made a point of calling on the new-comers. He fixed the sums that should be paid as subscriptions towards the maintenance of the Rooms, the Orchestra, the Water-Dippers and the Bell-ringers. He organised, and took control of, the music; he issued rules to govern the company at the balls and card-assemblies, and settled the price of admission to these entertainments. It cannot be discovered whether at Tunbridge Wells he published the famous Bath code, but that most of the rules laid down therein were made to apply there can be no doubt. It is a moot point whether the custom was introduced of the company already assembled calling on the new-comers, but as there is no record of this, probably the ceremony was dispensed with. If it was omitted, then certainly there was some good reason, since Nash was not the man to yield a point in these matters unless he was convinced of its inexpediency. It may well

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be that, while to Bath, which was so far from the metropolis, people went there only when they intended to make a lengthy stay, to Tunbridge Wells, only a few hours from London, visitors often came only for a short time. The custom in question, therefore, which at Bath was agreeable, at Tunbridge would have been an unmitigated nuisance and a heavy tax on the time of the company.

Nash came every year to Tunbridge Wells before the season began so as to supervise the arrangements and to see that everything was in order, but he always went away immediately after the first ball-night was over. "I daresay he did so," Thicknesse remarked, in his *Valetudinarian's Bath Guide*, "to let the public see, how unwieldy and awkward the business went on without a Regulator." Though the increasing flow of visitors to Tunbridge Wells was in the natural order of things, there can be no question but that much of it was due to the arrangements made by Nash for the convenience and entertainment of the visitors. Many came, indeed, because Nash was there, and more than one authority remarks that the people who had become acquainted with him at Bath, were frequently

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in the summer to be met with at “The Wells.” Indeed, his personal following was so considerable that when he was expected, the lodging-keepers, knowing that there would be an unusual demand for apartments, used to put up their prices. One year only did he remain in the town beyond his usual time, and then he was detained by illness, when he was nearly killed by the kindness of his subjects. It was on this occasion that one of his admirers published an appeal to Health, more distinguished for fervour than a sense of poetry.

TO RICHARD NASH, ESQ., ON HIS SICKNESS AT TUNBRIDGE

“ Say, must the friend of human kind,
Of most refin’d—of most diffusive mind;
Must Nash himself beneath these ailments grieve?
He felt for all—he felt—but to relieve,
To heal the sick—the wounded to restore,
And bid desponding nature mourn no more.
Thy quick’ning warmth, O let thy patron feel,
Improve thy springs with double power to heal:
Quick, hither, all-inspiring Health, repair,
And save the gay—and wretched from despair;
Thou only Esra’s drooping sons can’st cheer,
And stop the soft-ey’d virgin’s trickling tear;

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In murmurs who their Monarch's pains deplore;
While sickness faints, and pleasure is no more;
O let not death, with hasty strides advance,
Thou, mildest Charity, avert the lance;
His threat'ning power, celestial maid ! defeat;
Nor take him with thee, to thy well-known seat;
Leave him on earth some longer date behind,
To bless,—to polish,—and relieve mankind :
Come then, kind Health ! O quickly come away,
Bid Nash revive—and all the world be gay ! ”

Nor did Nash's popularity grow less as time passed. His affairs, which, it must be confessed, never at any period of his life were on a satisfactory footing, became more involved than usual in 1754, and a public appeal was made to extricate him from his financial embarrassments. To spare the great man's feelings, all appearance of charity was avoided by the organisers stating that the donations made to the fund were not donations in the usual sense, but subscriptions for copies of a work to be entitled, *The History of Bath and Tunbridge for these last Forty Years, by Richard Nash, Esq. ; with an Apology for the author's life*. A lady, whose identity has not been disclosed, but who, it was stated, was “ celebrated for her wit and accomplishments, and lately married to a foreign gentleman,” solicited

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the public in his interest in the following strains—

“ All ye who visit Bath and Tunbridge fraught
With too much money, and too little thought;
Whether 'tis health or pleasure ye pursue,
Forget old passions, or solicit new;
Heroes, that cross the rude *Hibernian* sea
In search of widows' hearts, or love of play;
Widows, that come in decent show of grieving,
To weep the dead—with eyes—unto the living!
All ye, to Nash, whom these gay realms obey,
Who fifty years hath borne undoubted sway,
And ne'er one tax imposed, subscriptions pay.
Come ev'ry graceful Beau, and gentle Belle,
Subscribe your names in praise of *bagatelle*;
And ev'ry fop, in honour of your train,
That one fop lives who hath not lived in vain.”

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The Corporation of Bath headed the subscription list by putting its money down for twenty-five copies; the inhabitants and visitors at Bath ordered considerable quantities, and those at Tunbridge Wells were no whit backward. Hundreds of pounds were collected and handed to Nash, who, however, issued no book. The *Beau* was then eighty years of age, and it is doubtful if he seriously intended to undertake the work, though in earlier days

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he certainly more than once coquetted with the idea. The *History of Bath and Tunbridge Wells during the last Forty Years* may be pardoned him, but what would we not give for that *Apology for the Author's Life*?

In spite of failing health, Nash retained his supremacy at Tunbridge, as at Bath, until his death in 1761. At each place he had successors, but amongst them there were none like unto him. His death was lamented in song by many contemporary writers, but it was left for Charles Tennyson Turner to indite the best epitaph—

“ ‘ Alas, alas ! ’ said Moschus in his woe,
When Bion died, ‘ he comes not back to sing
His songs, nor other lip his notes can bring
From the same pipe.’ So Bath regrets her *Beau* :
Her waters bubble upward without stop,
Each market sees her flowers and fruits replaced ;
Potherbs and roses—plums of every taste—
And peaches, brimming with ambrosial slop ;
All this repeats itself, a constant birth ;
But mighty Nash, strong-will’d and bold and shrewd,
Who awed and charm’d that modish multitude,
Hath found no heirs, and to the hollow earth
Bequeaths his fame ; for none his place may take ;
Long have such honours slept, and may not reawake.”

After the death of Nash one Collett was

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appointed Master of the Ceremonies at Bath. Of him nothing is known save that, according to a contemporary account, he was an agreeable person, a good dancer, and, in marked contradiction to his predecessor, a foe to gambling. To fill the *Beau's* place was admittedly difficult for any one, but Collett seems to have done it worse than another, and, probably disgusted with his thankless task, he resigned his office in 1673. Collett had ruled Tunbridge Wells as well as Bath, and his successor, Samuel Derrick, also controlled both places. Derrick, who had visited Tunbridge Wells in 1762, and put his impressions on record, was, after Nash, the most important of the Masters of the Ceremonies, and he was, besides, a man of some distinction in circles wider than that which embraced the ordinary visitors to the watering-places. Born in 1724, he was a scion of a good family that had fallen on evil days. He served an apprenticeship to a linen-draper, but he had no taste for commerce, and abandoned trade for the stage, in which profession, however, he failed to achieve any success. Presently he went to Grub Street, and there for a while found difficulty in earning his bread, to judge from

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Dr. Johnson's story. "Sir," he said to Boswell, "I honour Derrick for his presence of mind. One night when Floyd, another poor author, was wandering about the streets in the night, he found Derrick fast asleep upon a bulk; upon being suddenly waked, Derrick started up. 'My dear Floyd, I am sorry to see you in this destitute state; will you come home with me to *my lodgings?*'" Derrick did, indeed, have a very bad time. Asked where he lived on one occasion, "*Live!*" he cried, "I don't *live* anywhere—but I *starve* in a garret at a chandler's shop by the side of Fleet market." Brighter days, however, were in store for him. Publishers entrusted him with the translation of French and Latin works, and Johnson employed him to collect documents for his biography of Dryden. The Doctor had a liking for him, but was not an admirer of his work. When asked whether Derrick or Christopher Smart was the better poet, the great man replied that there was "no settling the point of precedency between a louse and a flea"; but against this may be set his comment on Derrick's *Letters written from Liverpool, Chester, Corke, the Lake of Killarney, Tunbridge Wells [and] Bath*, "Sir, I have often said,

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that if Derrick's *Letters* had been written by one of a more established name, they would have been thought very pretty letters." Thus the Doctor expressed himself to Boswell, who knew Derrick passing well, that worthy having been his first cicerone in London. But if Johnson did not think highly of Derrick as a man of letters, at least he said to his companion, "You are to consider that his being a literary man has got for him all that he has. It has made him King of Bath. Sir, he has nothing to say for himself, but that he is a writer. Had he not been a writer, he must have been sweeping the crossings in the streets, and asking halfpence from everybody that passed." Which statement may give pause to those who assert that literary men in the mid-eighteenth century were almost invariably looked down upon, not only individually, but also as a class. Derrick's tenure of his dual office at Bath and Tunbridge Wells did not pass off without disturbance. The wits made a butt of him because of his diminutive stature. Smollett makes one of the characters in *Humphrey Clinker* allude to him as "Tom Thumb"—and Garrick poked fun at him for his want of firmness.

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TO MR. DERRICK

UPON HIS RECALLING HIS ORDER AGAINST DANCING
MINUETS IN SOCKS

“Lycurgus of Bath,
Be not given to wrath,
Thy rigours the fair should not feel,
Still fix them your debtors,
Make laws like your betters,
And as fast as you make them—repeal.”

These things in themselves were trifles; but presently Derrick made a sad blunder in the discharge of his official duties—it is said that he omitted to invite some distinguished visitor to a festivity at Bath: thereupon a vigorous campaign was organised against him by some of the visitors and inhabitants, including James Quin, who, it was generally thought, had tried to depose Nash in the hope of replacing him, and, failing in that, was supposed to have been willing, after the *Beau's* death, to have succeeded him. Quin was regarded as a master of etiquette, and was consulted as to the course that should be taken with Derrick. “My Lord,” he told his interlocutor, “if you have a mind to put Derrick out, do it at once, and clap an extinguisher on it.” Derrick, hearing of the

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part that the retired actor had taken in the business, promptly avenged himself with the following lampoon—

“ When Quinn, of all grace and dignity void,
Murder’d Cato, the censor, and Brutus destroy’d;
He strutted, he mouth’d,—you no passion cou’d trace
In his action, deliv’ry, or plumb-pudding face;
When he massacred Comus, the gay god of mirth,
He was suffer’d, because we of actors had dearth,
But when Foote, with strong judgment and genuine
wit,
Upon all his peculiar absurdities hit;
When Garrick arose, with those talents and fire
Which nature and all the nine Muses inspire,
Poor GUTS was neglected, or laugh’d off the stage;
So, bursting with envy, and tortur’d with rage,
He damn’d the whole town in a fury, and fled,
Little BAYES an extinguisher clapp’d on his head.
Yet we never shall Falstaff behold so well done,
With such character, humour, such spirit and fun,
So great that we knew not which most to admire,
Glutton, parasite, pander, pimp, lecher, or liar;—
He felt as he spoke;—nature’s dictates are true;
When he *acted the part, his own picture he drew.*”

The attack upon the Master of the Ceremonies achieved its object, in so far as it induced Derrick to resign his office; but his successor, a Frenchman, in spite of “the abject servility and *outrée* politeness, for which his countrymen are so celebrated,” as a con-

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temporary wrote, became so unpopular that it was found desirable to dismiss him, and necessary to beg Derrick to allow himself, on his own terms, to be reinstated.

When Derrick died on March 28, 1669, Major Brereton succeeded him at Bath, but then, and henceforth, Tunbridge Wells pursued its own course, and elected its own Masters of the Ceremonies. The first to be appointed was one Blake, who at least had the determination to uphold the dignity of his office. "Pinchbeck is in great disgrace for behaving ill to the Master of the Ceremonies at Tunbridge, and says that he is many hundred pounds worse for his close connection with the King and the Royal Family," George Selwyn wrote to Lord Carlisle, from Almack's, August 3, 1775. "I found him as I passed to-day at his door lamenting his situation *à chaudes larmes*, and very desirous to make me a party in his dispute with the Master of the Ceremonies." The offender was Christopher Pinchbeck (second son of Christopher Pinchbeck, inventor of the copper and zinc alloy called after his name), a mechanician and inventor, and one of the party known as the "King's Friends" or the "Buckingham House

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Cabinet," who has his niche in history because of Mason's Ode, beginning—

“ Illustrious Pinchbeck ! condescend,
Thou well-belov'd, and best King's Friend,
These lyric lines to view.”

There is no record of how Pinchbeck's quarrel at Tunbridge Wells ended, but the mention of it shows that the office of Master of the Ceremonies was still at that date held in respect. Of those who, after Blake, accepted the office, scarcely any particulars have been handed down, and only their names survive. The order of succession was Richard Tyson, who issued a code of rules accepted by those who followed him; Fotheringham; Paul Amsinck, who in 1810 published a book on *Tunbridge Wells and its Neighbourhood*, and was declared by Mary Berry to be “ the only one of his kind I ever saw very like a gentleman, and not at all a coxcomb ”; Eld. T. Roberts, who was in power in 1820; Captain Merryweather; and Lieutenant Madden, R.M., who may perhaps have been that William John Madden, Captain of Marines, the son of James Madden, of Cole Hill House, Fulham, Middlesex, the brother of General Sir George Allen Madden,

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and the father of Sir Frederick Madden, the distinguished antiquary. Madden held office for eleven years, and resigned at the end of the season of 1836. He was the last Master of the Ceremonies at Tunbridge Wells.

CHAPTER V

AN EIGHTEENTH CENTURY POST-BAG FROM TUNBRIDGE WELLS

*John Gay to Mrs. Howard.*¹

Tunbridge, July 12, 1723.

. . . We have a young lady here that is very particular in her desires. I have known some ladies, who, if ever they prayed, and were sure their prayers would prevail, would ask an equipage, a title, a husband, or matadores;² but this lady,³ who is but seventeen, and has but thirty thousand pounds, places all her wishes in a pot of good ale. When her friends, for the sake of her shape and complexion, would dissuade her from it, she answers, with

¹ Henrietta Howard (*née* Hobart) married Charles Howard, third son of Henry, fifth Earl of Suffolk, who succeeded to the Earldom in 1731.

² Matadores constitute a good hand at ombre and quadrille.

³ Probably Miss Mary Jennings, who died, at the age of thirty, in November 1736.



From a painting by Heath]

[To face p. 166

THE HON. MRS. HOWARD, AFTERWARDS COUNTESS OF SUFFOLK

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the truest sincerity, that by the loss of shape and complexion she can only lose a husband, but that ale is her passion. I have not as yet drank with her, though I must own that I cannot help being fond of a lady who has so little disguise of her practice, either in her words or appearance. If to show you love her, you must drink with her, she has chosen an ill place for followers, for she is forbid the waters. Her shape is not very unlike a barrel; and I would describe her eyes, if I could look over the agreeable swellings of her cheeks, in which the rose predominates; nor can I perceive the least of the lily in the whole countenance. You see what thirty thousand pounds can do, for without that I could never have discovered all these agreeable peculiarities: in short, she is the *ortolan*, or rather, *wheat-ear*, of the place, for she is entirely a lump of fat; and the form of the universe itself is scarce more beautiful, for her figure is almost circular. After all I have said, I believe it will be in vain for me to declare I am not in love; and I am afraid that I have showed some imprudence in talking upon this subject, since you have declared that you like a friend that has a heart in his disposal.

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I assure you I am not mercenary, and that thirty thousand pounds have not half so much power with me as the woman I love.

Dr. Arbuthnot to Mrs. Howard.

Tunbridge Wells, July 4, 1728.

Her Royal Highness¹ goes on prosperously with the water. I think she is the strongest person in this place, if walking every day, modestly speaking, as far as would carry her to Seven Oaks, be a sign of bodily strength. Her Highness charms everybody by her affable and courteous behaviour, of which I am not only a witness, but have the honour to be a partaker. I tell her Highness she does more good than the waters: for she keeps some ladies in exercise and breath that want it. I have a very great respect for her, and I am only sorry there is no prince in Christendom at present that deserves her.

Lord Boyle to Mrs. Salkeld.

Tunbridge Wells, July 29, 1728.

We are honoured here with the presence of Princess Emilia, to whom the Tunbridgeans

¹ The Princess Amelia, second daughter of George II.

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leave no method untried to pay their Court. If she laughs (and sometimes Princesses laugh at nothing) we all grin, remembering the good old saying, "the frightfull'st Grinner, be the Winner." If she looks grave, we put on countenances more sorrowfull than the Mutes at a Funeral. When She walks, the Lamé and the Blind hobble after Her. If she complains of the Toothache, the ugly faces of the Women of Quality are wrop'd up in Flannel. In all reasonable Pleasures, nay in Pains as far as the Toothache and the Vapours, we humbly imitate her. . . . Under the Rose, I believe the renowned Wells are not of any great use. We are ordered down here commonly *pour la Maladie Imaginaire*, for the spirits and the melancholy to which our whole Nation are too subject. The Diversions and Amusements of the Place send us home again chearfull, and the foggy Air of London with the common Disappointments of Life urge our Return the following Year. The Water has a brackish taste never palatable. The situation of the Wells is pretty, the houses are not bad, and the Environs, amongst which is Penshurst, are delightfull. Among the infinite variety of People now here there is a

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Madman, surnamed Drapier, who strikes us all with pannick Fear, and affords us Diversion at the same time. He has raised a Regiment and enlists his soldiers in a manner not a little extraordinary. He fixes on any gentleman whom his wild Imagination represents as fit for martial Exploits, and, holding a Pistoll to the pore Captive's Breast, obliges him to open a Vein and write his name in Blood upon the Regimental Flag. Some have leap't out of Window to escape the Ceremony of bleeding, but many others have tamely submitted, and they march every morning in Military Order at his Heels. He has in his Suite an Irish Viscount, an English Baronet, three Jews, five Merchants, and a Supercargo. These are the Cheife, but the whole Regiment consists of Twenty-Seven. All agree he should go to Bedlam, but none dare send Him there. The unbelieving Jews tremble at the Sight of Him, and the sober Citizens of London turn pale when he enters the Room. To his natural heat he adds the strength of Liquor, and is a most terrible Hector. I wish he was chained up, for the Women are all frightened out of their Wits about Him; thank Heaven I have not the Honour of his Acquaintance. There

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is much Poetry stirring here, but it is very bad.

*Miss May Chambers*¹ to *Mrs. Howard*.

Tunbridge Wells, July 27, 1730.

. . . Lady Bristol's waters, for the most part, pass through her eyes. Her intimate friends think that this is caused rather by the unkindness of the cards, than grief for her daughter-in-law. Betty Southwell² is the person that will be the most liked here, and I think will pass her time the best; for she has made a resolution not to pronounce the word *no* while she is at Tunbridge. Monsieur and Madame Kinski,³ accompanied by Mr. Devenant and a troupe of foreigners, have spent some days here in great mirth; they all danced at the ball all sorts of dances, though some had never performed in that way before. They dined with the Duchess of Marlborough

¹ The eldest daughter of Thomas Chambers, of Hanworth, by his wife, *née* Lady Mary Berkeley. At the time of writing this letter she was staying with her maternal aunt, Lady Betty Germaine. In 1736 she married Lord Vere Beauclerk.

² Elizabeth Southwell was in the Queen's household. In 1736 she was made Housekeeper at Somerset House.

³ Count Philip de Kinski was at this time the Austrian Ambassador at the Court of St. James's.

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yesterday, who was in the mind to be mighty civil to them. They spent fourscore pounds in presents and raffles, and departed for London this morning, with a promise to return soon, if possible, for they love us all mightily. Mrs. Southwell's list of the company would be much more entertaining than mine, for she has got a choice selection of new friends. She was in perfect joy last night that Mrs. Pretty was arrived. Lady Betty [Germaine] and herself play only at quadrille; but the Duchess of Marlborough takes to losing her money at roly-poly. We all design to marry Mr. Conolly,¹ but he does not greatly take to anybody but Lady Betty; for whom all the virgins sat sighing around to dance with him, he seriously asked *her*, and would dance with nobody else upon her refusal.

Dr. Arbuthnot to Lady Suffolk.

July 6, 1731

I have been at Tunbridge for some time, and return again. Your Ladyship was a great subject of discourse for some days, which gave

¹ The Right Hon. William Conolly, M.P., of Stratton Hall, Staffordshire, the nephew and heir of William Conolly, Speaker of the Irish House of Commons.

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your friends very little subject of anxiety, and me a good deal of pleasure, to find you had so many who had a just notion of your Ladyship's character. There are at present very few folks at Tunbridge merely for their diversion. The company consists chiefly of *bon-vivants* with decayed stomachs, green-sickness virgins, unfruitful or miscarrying wives. The way your humble servant was used was comical enough. The medicines I prescribed, when they had done good, were prescribed by the patient to others, and so on, till at last the apothecary made gallons of bitters which they took by drams at the shop, and half-pecks of pills which they carried home in boxes. They filled my belly with good dinners at noon, and emptied my pockets at night at quadrille.

*The Rev. George Stone*¹ to the Earl of Cardigan.

August 17, 1738.

We have been for some time at a house of the Duke of Dorset's in Sussex,² near

¹ George Stone (1708 ?–1764) had gone over to Ireland with the Duke of Dorset on his appointment as Lord-Lieutenant as one of his chaplains. He was given the deanery of Derry in 1734, and eventually became Archbishop of Armagh.

² Knole.

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Tunbridge Wells, and as we have been very often there, I will tell you some of the humours of it. There is, in the first place, more company than was ever known to be there before. To begin with that part of it which to my sorrow I saw the oftenest, Felton Hervey is hardly second to Nash. He is more nauseous than ever. But there was some comfort, that he lost all his money; and he has been drawn on a fan (not unlike), with a child in his arms. He pretends to be very angry, but I suppose he is in his heart pleased to find himself so considerable.

Among the fair sex (though I should not have put Felton among the foul) Lady Rich has the honour to be laughed at more than anybody. She had been for some weeks the happiest creature in the world, till unfortunately last week Lady Albemarle came down, and happened to play once at cards with her. Lady Albemarle is gone, and her Ladyship is so very miserable that she cannot support it. It put her so in mind, she says, of the sort of thing that one is in London, and for her part she would not wish to go to Heaven but for three days.

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*Mrs. Donellan to Mrs. Montagu.*¹

Tunbridge, Friday noon [September 1743].

Our company quits us apace, but as there is not any one body but Lady Sunderland and Miss Sutton and Lady Cath^a Hanmer² that I care particularly for and they stay, and I am not fond of a crowd, I am quite easy about the matter. My morning, I generally take a rural walk with my Maid and Man, and I am just now returned from the Rocks, whose natural beauties strike me more agreeably than the laboured work of a Palace. My B^r rides every day, but walking does not agree with him, so I am forced to take up with my own contemplation and a hand over a Hell or ditch, for no one here cares for a walk that carries them further than Tod's room or Chevenix's Shop. In the evening I conform to the work, and play at Whist, Roli Poli, or what they wish, and make them wonder that a person who has a guinea in their pocket and can perform at such entertainments should prefer wandering in fields

¹ From the original letter (hitherto unpublished) in the possession of A. M. Broadley, Esq.

² Wife of Sir Thomas Hanmer, Speaker of the House of Commons, 1714-1715.

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and woods with company little better than the natives that inhabit them, to such enchanting entertainments, for the mornings here are as much the time of gameing as the evenings.

Mrs. Elizabeth Montagu to the Duchess of Portland.

Tunbridge Wells, the 27th [August] 1745.

. . . Your Grace has seen the place, so I shall not say anything of it in general, but only as to the company here at present. We cannot complain of want of numbers, for all nations and sects contribute to make up our complement of people. Here are Hungarians, Italians, French, Portuguese, Irish and Scotch. Then we have a great many Jews, with worse countenances than our friend Pontius Pilate, in a bad tapestry hanging. In opposition to these unbelievers, we have the very believing Roman Catholics; and to contrast with all these ceremonious religionists, we have the quaint puritans, and rigid presbyterians. I never saw a worse collection of human creatures in all my life. My comfort is, that as there are not many of them I ever saw before, I

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flatter myself there are few of them I shall ever see again.

I have great joy in Dr. Young,¹ whom I disturbed in a reverie; at first he started, then bowed, then fell back in a surprize, then began a speech, relapsed into his astonishment two or three times, forgot what he had been saying, began a new subject, and so went on. I told him your Grace desired he would write longer letters; to which he cried Ha! most emphatically, and I leave you to interpret what it meant. He had made a friendship with one person here, whom, I believe, you would not imagine to have been made for his bosom friend. You would, perhaps, suppose it was a bishop, a dean, a prebend, a pious preacher, a clergyman of exemplary life; or if a layman, of most virtuous conversation, one that had paraphrased St. Matthew, or wrote comments on Saint Paul; one blind with studying the Hebrew text, or more versed in the Jewish Chronicle than the English history; a man that knew more of the Levitical law, than of the civil or common law of England. You would not guess that this associate of the Doctor's was—

¹ Edward Young (1683–1765), author of *The Complaint, or, Night Thoughts on Life, Death, and Immortality*, 1742.

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old Cibber!¹ Certainly in their religious, moral, and civil character, there is no relation, but in their dramatic capacity there is some. But why the reverend divine, and serious author of the melancholy *Night Thoughts*, should desire to appear as a *persona dramatis* here I cannot imagine.

The waters have raised his spirits to a fine pitch, as your Grace will imagine when I tell you how sublime an answer he made to a very vulgar question; I asked him how long he stayed at the Wells? he said, as long as my rival staid. I was astonished how one who made no pretensions to any thing could have a rival, so I asked him for an explanation; he said, he would stay as long as the sun did. He did an admirable thing to Lady Sunderland;² on my mentioning Sir Robert Sutton, he asked her where Sir Robert's Lady was; on which we all laughed very heartily; and I brought him off, half ashamed to my lodgings; where, during breakfast, he assured me he

¹ Colley Cibber (1671–1751), actor and dramatist.

² Charles Spencer, third Earl of Sunderland (1674–1722), married three times. His third wife was Judith, daughter of Benjamin Tichborne, who, after her first husband's death, married Sir Robert Sutton, K.B. She died in 1749. Her sister was Mrs. Tichborne.



EDWARD YOUNG, D.D.

[To face p. 178

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asked after Lady Sunderland, because he had a great honour for her; and that having a respect for her sister, he designed to have enquired after her, if we had not put it out of his head by laughing at him. You must know, Mrs. Tichborne sat next to Lady Sunderland; it would have been admirable to have him finish his compliment in that manner.

I am just preparing for the ball. I am just come from riding, which is something for me to do, in a place where one groans under the pains and penalties of idleness. I beg my best respects to my Lord Duke; my sister hopes you will accept of her's; and I flatter myself, you sometimes remember

I am entirely your's,

E. MONTAGU.

*Mrs. Elizabeth Montagu to the Duchess of
Portland.*

Tunbridge [September], 1745.

I hope your Grace is sensible I should write oftener if it was consistent with drinking these waters; but really it is very inconvenient to apply a head to any business that cannot think without aching; I am not singular in this, for many people affirm thinking to be a

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pain at all times; I have more discretion than to declare as much any where but at Tunbridge. I have been in the vapours these two days, on account of Dr. Young's leaving us; he was so good as to let me have his company very often, and we used to ride, walk, and take sweet counsel together; a few days before he went away he carried Mrs. Rolt (of Hertfordshire) and myself, to Tunbridge five miles from hence, where we were to see some fine old ruins; but the manner of the journey was admirable, nor did I, at the end of it, admire the object we went to observe more than the means by which we saw it; and to give your Grace a description of the place, without an account of our journey to it, would be contradicting all form and order, and setting myself up as a critic upon all writers of travel. Much

“ Might be said of our passing worth,
And manner how we sallied forth; ”

but I shall, as briefly as possible, describe our progress, without dwelling on particular circumstances; and shall divest myself of all pomp of language, and proceed in as humble a style as my great subject will admit.

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First rode the Doctor on a tall steed, decently caparisoned in dark grey; next ambled Mrs. Rolt, on a hackney horse, lean as the famed Rozinante, but in shape much resembling Sancho's ass; then followed your humble servant on a milk-white palfrey, whose reverence for the human kind induced him to be governed by a creature not half as strong, and, I fear, scarce twice as wise as himself. By this enthusiasm of his, rather than my own skill, I rode on in safety, and at leisure, to observe the company; especially the two figures that brought up the rear. The first was my servant, valiantly armed with two uncharged pistols; whose holsters were covered with two civil harmless monsters that signified the valour and courtesy of our ancestors. The last was the Doctor's man, whose uncombed hair so resembled the mane of the horse he rode, one could not help imagining they were of kin, and wishing that for the honour of the family they had had one comb betwixt them; on his head was a velvet cap, much resembling a black saucepan, and on his side hung a little basket. Thus did we ride, or rather jog on, to Tunbridge town, which is five miles from the Wells. To tell you how the dogs barked

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at us, the children squalled, and the men and women stared, would take up too much time; let it suffice, that not even a tame magpie, or caged starling, let us pass unnoted. At last we arrived at the King's-head, where the loyalty of the Doctor induced him to alight, and then, knight-errant-like, he took his damsels from off their palfreys, and courteously handed us into the inn.

We took this progress to see the ruins of an old castle; but first our divine would visit the churchyard, where we read that folks were born and died, the natural, moral, and physical history of mankind. In the churchyard grazed the parson's steed, whose back was worn bare with carrying a pillion-seat for the comely, fat personage, this ecclesiastic's wife; and though the creature eat daily part of the parish, he was most miserably lean. Tired of the dead and living bones, Mrs. Rolt and I jumped over a stile, into the parson's field, and from thence, allured by the sight of golden pippins, we made an attempt to break into the holy man's orchard. He came most courteously to us, and invited us to his apple trees; to shew our moderation, we each of us gathered two mellow codlings, one of which I put into

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my pocket, from whence it sent forth a smell that I uncharitably supposed to proceed from the Doctor's servant, as he waited behind me at dinner. The good parson offered to shew us the inside of his church, but made some apology for his undress, which was a true canonical dishabille. He had on a grey striped calamanco nightgown, a wig that once was white, but, by the influence of an uncertain climate, turned to a pale orange, a brown hat, encompassed by a black hatband, a band, somewhat dirty, that decently retired under the shadow of his chin, a pair of grey stockings, well mended with blue worsted, strong symptom of the conjugal care and affection of his wife, who had mended his hose with the very worsted she bought for her own; what an instance of exalted friendship, and how uncommon in a degenerate age !

“How rare meet now such pairs in love and honour
join'd !”

When we had seen the church, the parson invited us to take some refreshment at his house, but Dr. Young thought we had before enough trespassed on the good man's time, so desired to be excused, else we should, no doubt,

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have been welcomed to the house by Madam, in her muslin pinnners, and sarsenet hood; who would have given us some mead, and a piece of a cake, that she had made in the Whitsun holidays to treat her cousins. However, Dr. Young, who would not be outdone in good offices, invited the divine to our inn, where we went to dinner; but he excused himself, and came after the meal was over, in hopes of smoking a pipe; but our Doctor hinted to him that it would not be proper to offer any incense, but sweet praise, to such goddesses as Mrs. Rolt and your humble servant. To say the truth, I saw a large horn tobacco-box, with Queen Ann's head upon it, peeping out of his pocket, but I did not care to take the hint, and desire him to put in use that magnificent piece of furniture. After dinner we walked to the old castle, which was built by Richard de Clare, Earl of Gloucester, in William Rufus's days. It has been a most magnificent building; the situation is extremely beautiful; the castle made a kind of half moon down to the river; and where the river does not defend it, it has been guarded by a large moat. It is now in the hands of a country squire, who is no common sort of man; but having said so much

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of the parson, I will let the rest of the parish depart in peace, though I cannot help feeling the utmost resentment at him for cutting down some fine trees almost cotemporary with the castle, which he did to make room for a plantation of sour grapes. The towers at the great gate are covered with fine venerable ivy.

It was late in the evening before we got home. . . .

Samuel Richardson to Miss S. Westcomb.

[Tunbridge Wells, August 2, 1748.]

. . . Here are great numbers of people got together. A very full season, and more coming every day—Great comfort to me! When I say that I cannot abide them, nor the diversions of the place, you must not think I am such a stoic as to despise the amusements I cannot partake of, purely on that account; indeed I do not. And I think youth is the season for gaiety. Nor is it a folly, as you are pleased to call it, in you, that you can find allurements in a brilliant circle, and at a sparkling ball. But there is moderation to be approved of in all these, which I see not here. And methinks I would wish that wives (particularly some that I see here) would not behave as if they

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thought themselves unmarried coquettes, and that it were polite to make their husbands the last people in their notices. Is it not enough for these people to find themselves dressed and adorned at an expense, both as to quality and quantity, that would furnish two wives or mistresses : but they must show that those dresses and ornaments are bestowed upon them to please and delight anybody rather than the person whom it should be their principal study to please ; and who perhaps confers, or contributes to confer, upon them the means by which they shine, and think themselves above him ? Secret history and scandal I love not—or I could tell you—you don't think what I could tell you.

But, waiving these invidious subjects, what if I could inform you, that among scores of belles, flatterers, triflers, who swim along these Walks, self-satisfied and pleased, and looking defiance to men (and to modesty, I had like to have said ; for bashfulness seems

be considered as want of breeding in all I see here) : a pretty woman is as rare as a black swan ? And when one such starts up, she is nicknamed a Beauty, and old and young fellows are set a-spinning after her.



SAMUEL RICHARDSON

[To face p. 186]

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Miss [Peggy] Banks was the belle when I came first down.—Yet she had been so many seasons here, that she obtained but a faint and languid attention; so that the smarts began to put her down in their list of had-beens!—New faces, my dear, are more sought after than fine faces. A piece of instruction lies here,—that women should not make even their faces cheap.

Miss Chudleigh next was the triumphant toast: a lively, sweet-tempered, gay, self-admired, and, not altogether without reason, generally admired lady—She moved not without crowds after her. She smiled at every one. Every one smiled before they saw her, when they heard she was on the Walk. She played, she won, she lost—all with equal good-humour. But, alas, she went off, before she was wished to go. And then the fellows' hearts were almost broke for a new beauty.

Behold! seasonably, the very day that she went away entered upon the walks Miss L. of Hackney!—Miss Chudleigh was forgot (who would wish for so transient a dominion in the land of fickledom!)—And have you seen the new beauty?—And have you seen Miss ——? was all the enquiry from smart to smartless.—

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But she had not traversed the Walks two days, before she was found to want spirit and life. Miss Chudleigh was remembered by those who wished for the brilliant mistress, and scorned the wife-like quality of sedateness—And Miss L. is now seen with a very silly fellow or two, walking backwards and forwards unmolested—dwindling down from the new beauty to a very pretty girl; and perhaps glad to come off so. For, upon my word, my dear, there are very few pretty girls here. And yet I look not upon the sex with an undelighted eye, old as I am; nor with a very severe one—But modesty, humility, graciousness, are now all banished from the behaviour of these public-place frequenters of the sex—Women are not what they were—I see not but they have as much courage as the men—The men, indeed, at these public places seem to like them the better for it. No wonder; for they find the less difficulty to make parties with them, and to get into their companies—But one secret I could tell them; that the single men who would make the best companions for life, come not, on set purpose, to these public places to choose one.

But here, to change the scene, to see Mr.

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W—sh at eighty (Mr. Cibber calls him papa), and Mr. Cibber at seventy-seven, hunting after new faces; and thinking themselves happy if they can obtain the notice and familiarity of a fine woman !—How ridiculous !—If you have not been at Tunbridge, you may nevertheless have heard that here are a parcel of fellows, mean traders, whom they call touters, and their business touting—riding out miles to meet coaches and company coming hither, to beg their custom while here.

Mr. Cibber was over head and ears in love with Miss Chudleigh. Her admirers (such was his happiness) were not jealous of him : but, pleased with that wit in him which they had not, were always for calling him to her. She said pretty things—for she was Miss Chudleigh. He said pretty things—for he was Mr. Cibber; and all the company, men and women, seemed to think they had an interest in what was said, and were half as well pleased as if they had said the sprightly things themselves; and mighty well contented were they to be second-hand repeaters of the pretty things. But once I faced the laureat squatted upon one of the benches, with a face more wrinkled than ordinary with disappointment. “ I

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thought," said I, "you were of the party at the tea-treats—Miss Chudleigh is gone into the tea-room."—"Pshaw!" said he, "there is no coming at her, she is so surrounded by the toupets"—And I left him upon the fret—But he was called to her soon after; and in flew, and his face shone again, and he looked smooth. . . .

Another extraordinary old man we have had here, but of a very different turn; the noted Mr. Whiston, showing eclipses, and explaining other phœnomena of the stars, and preaching the millennium, and anabaptism (for he is now, it seems, of that persuasion) to gay people, who, if they have white teeth, hear him with open mouths, though perhaps shut hearts; and after his lecture is over, not a bit the wiser, run from him, the more eagerly to C—r and W—sh, and to flutter among the loud-laughing young fellows upon the walks, like boys and girls at a breaking-up.

Mrs. Elizabeth Montagu to Mrs. Donellan.

Tunbridge Wells, Sept. the 8th, 1749.

The various occupations of a place like this make one a bad correspondent, and having been a long time very much out of health,

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I was irretrievably sunk in a debt of letters, which is now something abated; but I am far from having acquitted myself of the devoirs of a good correspondent. I have been for a fortnight in a most flourishing state of health, which to acquire and maintain has cost me time and pains; drinking waters, riding on horseback, airing in a post-chaise, continual dissipation, and uninterrupted idleness; sacrificing still the end of living to the means. Our company is much diminished; of the many that go there are a few whom one regrets; and first of the rank of these are Mr. and Mrs. Southwell. I promised, or threatened, Mr. Southwell to write his memoirs; in the first place he is *l'ami du genre humain*, so popular, so complaisant, that I (who am jealous of his favours) want to infuse a little of the zest of misanthropy into him; then for the ladies from fourscore, to fourteen, he is their zealous admirer, and faithful humble servant. I found him guilty on the statute of coquetry with the Countess of Abercorn: old Mrs. Ashley has added a yard of whalebone to her plumpers merely on his account; and really she seems now to have put a perfect farthingale over her upper jaw, to the great discomfort of her

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gums, who liked better the soft covering of her lips.

You will be perhaps ready to enquire whom I pass my time with here; why, to my comfort, there are some still left who are agreeable, reasonable people. The Attorney-General and his wife are my old acquaintance, and amiable, agreeable companions; then about twenty yards from our house lodges the wife of Admiral Boscawen, a very sensible, lively, ingenious woman, and who seems to have good moral qualities; we often pass the evening together partly in conversation, partly in reading. Lady Robinson, too, is here, but so ill as not to come abroad; but I visit her often on the footing of a country neighbour; she is very agreeable, and has a charming little family, who are governed with great prudence and regularity. Here are, besides, three or four sensible, agreeable men, some of whom usually dine with us, so that the hours one is to pass, do not go off in the heaviest manner; and the great amendment I have found by the waters lately, keeps up my spirits. We have not fixed any time for going away; the six weeks, which is the usual term for drinking the waters, will be expired next Friday: but the interrup-

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tions I have met with from illness in taking them, will induce me to stay as long as the weather is good.

Mrs. Elizabeth Montagu to Mrs. Donellan.

Tunbridge Wells, the 26th, 1749.

. . . Indeed this is a strange place, for one has neither business nor leisure here—so many glasses of water are to be drank, so many buttered rolls to be eaten, so many turns on the walk to be taken, so many miles to be gone in a post-chaise or on horseback, so much pains to be well, so much attention to be civil, that breakfasting, visiting, etc., etc., leave one no time even to write the important transactions of the day. Since I wrote to you we have had a change of persons, but not of amusements; we have lost most of those who by the courtesy of the world are called good company; but of politeness or sense no visible decrease. In the beginning of the season there are many people of quality whose behaviour is extremely bourgeois; at the end of it, citizens who by their pride and their impertinence think they are behaving like persons of quality; and each, by happily deviating from the manners and conduct their condition of life seems to

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prescribe, meet in the same point of behaviour, and are equally agreeable and well bred.

Tunbridge seems the parliament of the world, where every country and every rank has its representative; we have Jews of every tribe, and Christian people of all nations and conditions. Next to some German, whose noble blood might entitle him to be Grand Master of Malta, sits a pin-maker's wife from Smock-alley; pickpockets, who are come to the top of their profession, play with noble dukes at brag. For my part, I am diverted with the medley; the different characters and figures are amusing, especially at the balls, where persons of every age, size, and shape, step forth to dance; some who have but just quitted their leading-strings, others whom it would become to shift into the lame and slippered pantaloon; but who will believe it is too soon to attempt, or too late to endeavour, to charm! But I should be very weary of this place if I had no better entertainment than the absurdities of it. Were I a philosopher, I believe I should be a laughing one; but I might have laughed here till I had cried in good earnest, if I had not found a very agreeable companion amongst them; and it

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is to some partial representation of yours I owe the pleasure of her acquaintance; you will guess I mean Mrs. Cleland. I am greatly charmed with her; her good sense, her wit, her knowledge of the world, her manner, everything delights me; she has the vivacity of youth without its petulance; her perfections are so happily tempered they have a moral harmony, if one may use the expression; no note too sharp, nor none too flat; her conversation is too gentle to be called wise, and too correct to be called witty; but with that mixture of imagination and judgment which cannot be described or expressed, I am charmed with her to a degree I do not care to own, as I have always declared against sudden friendships. She seems to have almost as much indulgence to me for my honest simplicity of heart as I have respect for accomplishments, and is extremely obliging to me on that account. Lady Allen has been often ill, so not much amongst us. The Miss Allens I am not much acquainted with; I have given their aunt so visible a preference that I think they may possibly hate me, which, in a Christian sense, I should be sorry for, but no otherwise, for I detest the ambition of universal empire,

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even in hearts; I would not be understood as having any dislike to these ladies; I think them sensible, and I believe them good, but I do not think the Graces assisted Lucina at their birth. There are but few whom those delicate ladies breathe upon, and perhaps they thought Mrs. Cleland might officiate in their stead; but I do not discover any traces of her education.

We have here Lady Parker and her two daughters; they make a very remarkable figure, and will ruin the poor mad-woman of Tunbridge by outdoing her in dress; such hats, capuchins, and short-sacks, as were never seen! One of the ladies looks like a state bed running upon castors; she has robbed the valance and tester of a bed for a trimming: they have each of them a lover; indeed as to the dowager, she seems to have no greater joys than E O and a toad-eater can give her. I am sorry for poor Lady Egmont; I hope you were not in any way engaged in the last melancholy scene, for your goodness and humanity make you undertake those offices of friendship which ill agree with your constitution. It gives me great pleasure to hear you are in so good a state of health. I hope

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you will not quit your retirement at Richmond as long as you can pursue your scheme of exercise. In London one is so embarrassed with human creatures, one has no time to think of that excellent animal a horse; though two hours in a day spent on his back gives one more spirits, cheerfulness, and fortitude, than twice the time passed with a moral philosopher or stoic. I have always thought tossing in a blanket one of the best-instituted punishments in the world for slight offences, as I am convinced half of our faults arise from want of shaking the machine, so that it is a medicine as well as a chastisement. I had fixed a day for leaving Tunbridge, but Dr. Jurin thinks I should drink some gallons more water, and I really find myself so well here, I shall be afraid to leave off the waters for fear of losing the joy of health. The Bishop and Mrs. Sherlock are just gone from hence; he recovered much by the waters, and has now no greater disease than old age; but that you will say is a complication of distempers. I am glad the little Père is well, though he does not condescend to write to me; he thinks I am in the land of vanities, and so takes no thought about me; but if I am not worthy of his sacred

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quill, sure a gold pen, bought of Mrs. Chevenix, and given by a fine lady, might write to a Tunbridge dame. If writing did not disagree with me I would send him a long letter for his punishment; but tell him my silence has more anger and disdain in it than the most pompous words could express.

Mrs. Elizabeth Montagu to her Husband.

Tunbridge Wells, 1749.

May this find you in perfect health, enjoying the quiet, but delicate pleasures of the country ! I am now sitting opposite to a view not unlike that from your terrace at Sandleford. Tunbridge, though it contains persons of high rank and distinction, does not, from its buildings, make a more superb figure than Newtown; small houses irregularly placed, with trees intermixed, appear rural and romantic, and though the inhabitants of these little edifices may not condescend to own that, as the song says—

“ To folks in a cottage contentment is wealth ! ”

I fear few of them are possessed of anything better. Half of us come here to cure the bodily evils occasioned by laziness; the other

Weyher's Extract

Will hold in a few days
my little party in
celebration of the

We had more against the Cantab.
for 200 Netherland, you shall
have an additional seed of Twelve

Could do nothing to
in a case of such magnitude.

on what a rocky
mine is



~NEDDY RACES at TUNBRIDGE WFLS, or a "gallop" down the "one mile" for the Ladies' Club.

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half to remedy the mental disease of idleness and inoccupation, called *l'ennui*; heavy fines raised on wealth and rank, which impartial nature levies on her elder sons, while her laborious younger children neither groan with bodily pain, nor sigh with imaginary dissatisfaction. . . .

Sir Ralph Millbank is here with a great retinue; I have not yet seen them, for we never go to the walks but in the morning to drink the waters. I should have wrote you a long letter to-day, but Lady Talbot came in and prevented me. Lady Sandwich seems still to think of going to Huntingdon races, which is a great concern to me, for she is the most agreeable person to live with imaginable; and we have settled ourselves together in a manner quite easy and convenient to us both.

*Mrs. Elizabeth Montagu to the Rev. Mr.
Freind.*

Tunbridge Wells, 1749.

To excuse my silence I must give you an account of where I have been, and how employed; and when you find that I have been drinking Tunbridge waters you will less wonder

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I have not wrote, an employment judged improper here, as it is apt to make the waters get into the head, where they have an effect very unlike Helicon; and, instead of a *docte et sainte ivresse*, give one a giddiness and an intoxication that is accompanied with a strange kind of stupidity. I came here earlier in the season than I had proposed, on purpose to enjoy the company of Lady Sandwich, who could not stay here after the races at Huntingdon began. We were here three weeks in great happiness and tranquillity; the place was thin of company, but I wanted none while I had her's; we drank the waters, and walked, in the morning; in the evening we went out together in a post-chaise. Her conversation has every ornament and charm, her temper is even and amiable, her behaviour owes its constant politeness to a delicacy of morals; think how happy such a friend must make me! . . .

I think I should now give you some account of the company here: we have the Dutchess of Bedford, Lord and Lady Fitzwalter, and Lady Ancram, Lady Anson, Lord and Lady Elibank, dowager Lady Barrington, Lady Betty Germaine, Lord and Lady Vere Beau-

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clerk, Lady Talbot, Lord March, and Lord Eglinton; Lord Granby and Lord Powis are just gone away, as is the Duchess of Somerset and her daughters; Lady Winchelsea, Mr. Edward Finch and Mrs. Finch, Mr. Vane and Mrs. Hope, Lady Lucy and Col. Howard are here; Mr. and Mrs. Ellis arrived last night; besides these we have several people of fashion, and of Jews a great and mighty tribe. Within this week we have had a great number of people, but for the most part they rather have added to the number than to the dignity of our company. I was sorry the Dutchess of Somerset left us; her behaviour was so obliging and so proper, I thought her a good example for persons of great rank; it is surprizing that the princely state, and princely pride, she had been so long used to, should have left her such an easiness of manners; she seemed to say and do what was civil without the intention of being gracious. Lady Francis Seymour is very handsome, Lady Charlotte is not so, but more agreeable than her sister by an unaffected good humour. In many respects this place is inferior to the Bath, in some it is better. We are not confined here in streets; the houses are scattered irregularly,

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and Tunbridge Wells looks, from the window I now sit by, a little like the village you see from our terrace at Sandleford, only that the inhabitants, instead of Jack and Joan, are my Lord and Lady. The edifices they inhabit are not much greater, nor perhaps is there more pleasure or content among the great and rich who have bad nerves, than with the healthful and laborious peasant.

*Mrs. Montagu to Mrs. Robinson.*¹

Tunbridge Wells,

Friday, 10th of May [1750].

It was a week yesterday since I came hither. We have had but rough and unpleasant weather, and I dwell on an Eminence, and ride on the Whirlwind tho' I do not direct the Storm. However, we have a Stone House which is warmer than the common wooden buildings at this place, and I am really much at home, have a large house to our selves, and have only our own Servants. . . . There has not been much company at Tunbridge this Season, and there seems not to be a spirit of gayety among them. The Dutchess of Norfolk has

¹ From the original letter (hitherto unpublished) in the possession of A. M. Broadley, Esq.

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been here a great while, but never comes out, being very ill. She has with her Lord and Lady Clifford, and Miss Clifford, Lady Betty Germaine and Lady Vere are here. Lady Jane Cook [*i. e.* Coke] and Lady Abercorn, Lady Catherine Pelham, Miss Pelham, Lady Marvel, Mr. and Mrs. Southwood, Mrs. Boscawen (who was a Miss Granville) and many others whose names you may know but that wd take up too much of my Paper.

*Lady Jane Coke*¹ to *Mrs. Jane Eyre*.

Savile Row (London), August the 21st, 1750.

I would not begin a letter to you from Tunbridge, my dear Mrs. Eyre, as holding down my head with the waters was very disagreeable to me. They have done me a great deal of good, but I was never better pleased with leaving any place, for it is only amusing to those who pass their time in public. I who never went into the Rooms grew

¹ Lady Jane Wharton (1706–1761), the eldest daughter of Thomas, fifth Baron and first Marquis of Wharton, married (i) in 1723, James Holt, of Redgrave, Suffolk, who died six years later, and (ii) in 1733, Robert Coke, of Longford, Derbyshire, Vice-Chamberlain to Queen Caroline, and brother to the first Earl of Leicester.

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extremely tired. There was a great deal of company, and some beauties, but by all I heard the men's attachment was to the gaming table, and not to the ladies. A Miss Roach,¹ educated in France, was the most admired. She is entirely French, so much so in her behaviour that such an awkward Englishwoman as myself would think her rather odd than pleasing. Lady Vane was there with her lord, and began several balls. She seems quite easy, though no woman of any rank took the least notice of her. In my whole life I never saw anybody altered to the degree she is. I have not seen her near since her days of innocence and beauty, and really should not have known her if I had not been told her name, as there is not the least remains of what she was. If anybody has a mind to learn new fashions, I would advise their going to Tunbridge, where they abound, and I don't think even Blowzabella² in her flounces came up to some figures I saw in a morning, and I was told that at the balls they outdid their usual outdoings. Skeleton caps without

¹ Possibly a daughter of Edward Roach, of Trabolgan, County Cork.

² "Blowzabella" was Mrs. Barnes, of Derby.

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number (which I conclude you have seen), made of colours. . . .

Mrs. Elizabeth Montagu to her Husband.

Tunbridge, September, 1751.

This place continues to encrease in company. We have crowds, and very little amusement; and foreigners, and very little variety. The Duke of Newcastle was at a ball last night, given by Mr. Connor, to the politest part of the company. The busy statesman was written on his brow; he whispered to the foreign ministers with all the seriousness of a negotiator, though I verily believe he was only talking of Lewes races. Sir Thomas Robinson was no less embarrassed with the business of doing the honours to the secretary of state, than the secretary of state with doing the business of the nation. There are some reflections and characters in La Bruyère, which would have fitted them both, but far be it from me to quote them in a letter to travel by the post. We expect these goddesses, the Gunnings; and Sir Thomas Robinson, after being master of the ceremonies to the French ambassador, and our secretary of state, proposes to be gallant to these fair dames.

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My father is very gay. Sir William Brown starts many arguments for his amusement. Mr. West reads to us in the evening, and the wit of the last age supplies us, when we do not meet with any in this.

Lady Jane Coke to Mrs. Eyre.

Windsor, August 13, 1752.

I hope my dear Mrs. Eyre remembers that I have been at Tunbridge and then she will excuse my long silence, for any sort of application gives the headache, and there is not an hour unemployed. I drank the waters five weeks, and they have done my stomach a vast deal of good. Several of my particular acquaintance being there, made the place more agreeable to me than it would other ways have been, but notwithstanding that, I found myself very glad to quit the hurries I lived in at Tunbridge for the quiet I enjoy at Windsor, where I am now settled for some time. . . . I suppose you'll expect some account of Tunbridge. It used to afford abundance, but this season has not produced even a lampoon, no beauties, and the Act of Parliament that has put a stop to publick gaming prevent a great many young men's coming.

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Poor Nash has had a fit, but does not seem to mind it, though he looks just a-going. Miss Chudleigh was there a fortnight, so altered, I was surprised to see her by day light. Lady Ann Hamilton¹ was not with her, who since the small-pox has no remains of beauty but in her own opinion. The Duke of K[ingston] was always with them, that is a surprising affair, we are so used at Windsor to their coming together here to her mother, who is housekeeper, that now 'tis scarce mentioned.

Mrs. Elizabeth Montagu to her cousin, Gilbert West.

Tunbridge Wells, Wednesday, Sept. 2d, 1752.

To say I regret the loss of your company at this place, and in my present situation, would very ill express the value I set on your conversation, and I should be cautious of even appearing to fall short in my estimation of it, as it is by that only I can be at all worthy of the pleasures and advantages that arise

¹ Lady Ann Hamilton, a daughter of the fifth Duke of Hamilton. In 1761 she married Arthur, first Marquis of Donegall.

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from it. The weather has been very bad ever since you left us, and many people are gone away, which I less wonder at than to see their places supplied by a new set : as to the change of company on the walks, I regard it no more than the succession of vegetables in the garden : they vary the prospect indeed, but make little difference in the pleasure of the walk, and one scarce observes whether the early primrose, or Michaelmas daisy enamel the pastures. Sir W. Brown has left us ; I hear he retreated with discontent ; he thought himself ill rewarded for the pains he took to canvass all subjects, and inform all hearers. He has not found out that the wisest man in the company is not always the most welcome, and that people are not at all times disposed to be informed. I hope Miss Speed likes her hat ; I am sorry she had it not earlier in the summer, such a bergere would bring pastoral life into fashion. Your admirer, Mr. Coventry, enquired after you this morning. I was not at the ball last night, but the misses say it was a very agreeable one ; perhaps they liked it the better as Miss Bladen was not there to outshine them, for so strong in woman is the laudable desire of pleasing, each would have

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that happy power confined entirely to her own person. I have observed for some days, that Lady Abercorn and Lady Townshend, each determining to have the most wit of any person in the company, always choose different parties and different ends of the room. Dr. Stewart has been here two or three days, but I am not acquainted with him, so I cannot tell you whether he comes here as a physician or an invalid.

Gilbert West to Mrs. Elizabeth Montagu.

Tunbridge Wells, 27th May, 1753.

Your kind letter, which I received upon my coming from chapel, is the most agreeable thing I have met with at Tunbridge, where we arrived last night about seven. It came very seasonably to relieve my spirits, which are much sunk, by the extreme dejection which appears to-day in Mr. Pitt, from a night passed entirely without sleep, notwithstanding all the precautions which were taken within doors to make it still and quiet, and the accidental tranquillity, arising from the present emptiness and desolation of this place, to which no other invalids besides ourselves are yet arrived, or even expected to arrive, as

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yet. He began to drink the waters to-day, but as they are sometimes very slow in their operations, I much fear both he, and those friends who cannot help sympathising with him, will suffer a great deal, before the wished-for effect will take place; for this *insomnium*, his physicians have prescribed opiates, a medicine, which in this case, though they may procure a temporary ease, yet often recoil upon the spirits. I think his physicians have been to blame in giving all their attention to the disorder in his bowels, and not sufficiently regarding the distemperature of his spirits, a disease, much more to be apprehended than the other; while he continues under this oppression, I am afraid it will be impossible for me to leave him, as he fancies me of the utmost use to him, as a friend and a comforter; but I hope in God he will soon find some alteration for the better, of which I shall be glad to give you the earliest information. In the mean time, I beg you will take care of your health, and as the most effectual means of establishing it, I most earnestly desire you will follow Mr. Montagu's exhortations to repair forthwith to Tunbridge; as by so doing, you will not only contribute to the regaining your

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own health and spirits, but to the comfort and felicity of some here, who love and admire you much, especially one, who values himself much upon the title of your friend, and merits it equally by the great esteem and affection which he has for you. Mr. Pitt expressed a due sense of your goodness in enquiring so particularly after him; and that you may know how high you stand in his opinion, I must inform you, that in a conversation with Molly, he pronounced you the most *perfect woman* he ever met with. I am with the utmost sincerity and the highest regard, my dearest Cousin's

most affectionate friend,

and obliged humble servant,

GIL. WEST.

Mrs. Montagu to her Husband.

June 8, 1753.

. . . We went from this venerable seat, to a place called New Vauxhall, where Mr. Pitt had provided us a good dinner; the view from it is romantic; we staid there till the cool of the evening, and then returned home. We drank tea yesterday in the most beautiful rural scene that can be imagined, which

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Mr. Pitt had discovered in his morning's ride, about half a mile from hence; he ordered a tent to be pitched, tea to be prepared, and his French horn to breathe music like the unseen genius of the wood. The company dined with me; and we set out, number eight. After tea we rambled about for an hour, seeing several views, some wild as Salvator Rosa, others placid, and with the setting sun, worthy of Claude Lorrain. These parties are good for health and pleasure, and break the dull line of a Tunbridge life. Sir George Lyttelton¹ and Mr. Bowers² are come to spend a few days with Mr. Pitt.

*Mrs. Montagu to her Husband.*³

Tunbridge, July y^e 11th, 1753.

Mr. Fox and Lady Caroline are come here for a few days, as are Ld and Lady Hillesborough : as pleasure not health is their object they will not stay long. I was at the Ball

¹ George Lyttelton, first Baron Lyttelton (1709–1773), who had succeeded his father as baronet in September 1751. He was raised to the peerage five years later.

² (?) Archibald Bower (1686–1766), author of a *History of the Popes*, a friend of Lyttelton, who in 1754 appointed him Clerk of the Buck-warrants.

³ From the original letter (hitherto unpublished) in the possession of A. M. Broadley, Esq.

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last night but there were so few dancers it hardly deserved the name of one. Mr. and Mrs. West are gone to Ld Westmorland's, Mr. Pitt goes to-morrow to Hastings for two days; the shore there is very bold and fine, and the views very delightful, the roads to it are but indifferent as is frequent in this Country . . . so that the things best worth seeing are inaccessible to those who cannot ride on horseback.

Mrs. Elizabeth Montagu to her Husband.

Tunbridge Wells, 30th August, 1754.

. . . I am drinking the waters very successfully. As to pleasure, it does not abound in the public rooms. Crowds are generally gay, but there is a want of spirits in our company, which I imagine to be owing to the frequency of assemblies, and the general dissipation of the present life. When the country lady came hither from domestic cares and attendance on her dairy and hen-roost, and her cherry-cheek'd daughter from plain work and pastry, the mechanic's wife from attendance on her shop and accounts, Tunbridge was a place of recreation, but now the squire's lady comes from whisk in assemblies, miss from Ranelagh,

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and the *bonne bourgeoisie* from Marybone Gardens; it is but the same scene on another stage. . . . The Dutchess of Norfolk being indisposed to-day, talks of leaving the place, though she has not drank the water a week. The Dutchess of Newcastle is coming to this place very ill; I believe the unhappy state of public affairs makes her so. “Ambition should be made of sterner stuff.” The wife of a first minister should not have weak nerves.

Gilbert West to Mrs. Montagu.

Tunbridge Wells, 9th of July, 1755.

. . . As for the life I now lead here, it affords so little variety, and is so very dull and uniform, that I cannot pick out any incidents that can yield you entertainment. It is in almost every circumstance very different from that I have ever lived before upon Mount Ephraim, for this reason, I avoid bringing them into a comparison, and therefore try my utmost to banish from my memory every idea of times past; and to separate from every object round about me, all those associations from which I once imagined I should always be able to derive pleasure; but experience has taught me, that it is not always agreeable to

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recollect past joys; and you have called upon me to reflect, that there are few situations that do not allow of some pleasures, and that to be willing and ready to take those that offer, is the happiest disposition of mind. Adieu then, the happy seasons of 1750, 51, 52, and 53, come no more to disquiet and sadden 1755. She pretends not to compare her joys with yours; yet she offers health, tranquillity, and content. I hope you will for the future make no more enquiries, that may lead my imagination back to past times.

When I pass Mount Ephraim, and see the Stone-house, &c., I think not of Mr. Pitt, &c., but consider it as belonging to Mr. Walpole and Lady Rachel, persons with whom I have no concern, and so pass careless on to the well, drink my water, then, perhaps, take a turn round the common, go upon the walks; make my bow to half a dozen ladies, and say half a dozen words to each of them; and if I can, select some to converse with; among these, I find none so agreeable as your friend Mrs. Vesey,¹ who arrived at Tunbridge the day we

¹ Elizabeth Vesey (1715 ?–1791), one of the Blue-Stocking coterie, married (i) William Handcock, (ii) Agmondesham Vesey, M.P. for Haverstown, Kildare, afterwards Accountant-General of Ireland.

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came, and took occasion soon after to begin a conversation with me, by enquiring after you.

*Mrs. Montagu to her Husband.*¹

Tunbridge Wells, Tuesday morn, 30 June, 1759.

I had a very agreeable journey hither, but found my present lodging too small to receive the maids who are to come in the post chaise, so cannot send for them till Lady Fitzwilliam is well enough to leave Dr. Morley's. I can give but little account of Tunbridge as yet. I drank ye waters at ye well this morning, and have now taken leave of ye Walks until to-morrow as this fine weather will be better spent in an airing than on the Pantiles. . . . Ld Bath was on ye Walks and Genl. Pulteney and Mr. and Mrs. Torriano and Mr. Massiotz. Many of the ladies are too lazy to come down in a morning, and these that do come to ye Well are an hour later than when I was here last. . . . People are in great spirits about our victory in Germany. I shall not send for ye maids till ye end of the week at soonest. I believe not before Monday. I have got ye smallest lodging I ever saw, if the windows

¹ From the original letter (hitherto unpublished) in the possession of A. M. Broadley, Esq.

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were shut on a warm day I should be stifled; however, it is clean.

A PARTICULAR DESCRIPTION OF TUNBRIDGE WELLS,

*In a Letter from a Gentleman at that Place
to his Friend in Town.*

Tunbridge-Wells, Aug. 30, 1767.

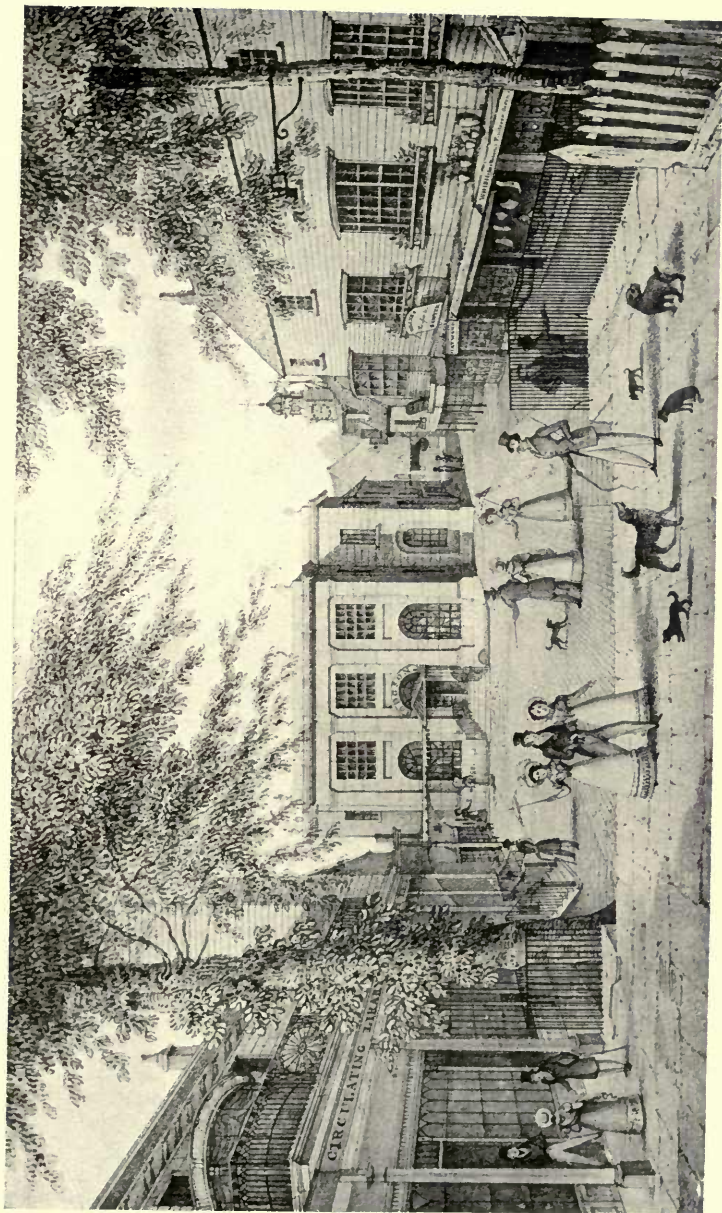
DEAR GEORGE,

I am happy in informing you, that by getting into a quiet snug Lodging, on Mount Ephraim, as advised by your Medical Friend (where I live with the Family) and by a strict Perseverance in using the Waters, with a gentle Ride every Day, when the Weather would permit me, I have got quite rid of the Relaxation and vast Depression, the severe Fever I had last Winter, and a nine Months Ague had thrown me into; have a most excellent Appetite, and being (Thanks to Providence and you) as well as ever I was in my Life. In Return, agreeable to your Desire, I send you the most precise Account of this Place, and its Customs, my Observations and Enquiries could obtain.

And first, as to the Place and its Environs,

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I must confess, from the romantic, rural, rugged, and vast Variety of different Views, and the Rides I have found out, that it is to me, in fine Weather, as agreeable and pleasant a Place as ever I saw, and in bad Weather as disagreeable, except on the Walks themselves, where, either by Chance or Foresight in the first Constructors, you can go from the Well to all the Rooms, Coffee-Houses, and Shops, without being exposed to Rain or Sun; an Advantage this Place, of all other public ones which I have seen, has peculiar to itself. The Lodging-Houses are scattered about very promiscuously and agreeably, in Groves, &c., on Mount Sion, Mount Pleasant, Mount Ephraim, and on the Walks themselves (the last of which three Mounts was esteemed, as I am informed, by the famous Doctor Pellet, as the Montpelier of England; I am sure I may call it so). Here are three very good Inns or Taverns—the Angel, the Gloucester, and the Sussex. On your first Arrival, nay, even on the Road, you are *touted* (a Cant Word for soliciting your custom at this Place) by all the Bakers, Butchers, Brewers, Grocers, Tavern Keepers, Water Dippers, &c., &c., and on the first Morning before you are well awake,



VIEW OF TUNBRIDGE WELLS, BATHS, LIBRARY, ETC., 1827

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by the Music, to whom, I find, besides a small Present for thus disturbing you, every Family and single Gentleman subscribe from Half a Crown to Half a Guinea, for which they play in a Gallery built for that Purpose, facing the great Rooms on the Walks, three Times every Day, viz. from 9 till 10 in the Morning, from 12 to 1 at Noon, and from 6 till 7 in the Afternoon, and at the Balls. On your entering into any of the great Rooms, you are solicited in the same Manner, where the Subscription is from a Crown to a Guinea, each Person according to their Rank; for which you are entitled to walk in the Rooms, to have Fires lighted for you, to read the News-Papers which come in every Day, to Wax, Wafers, Pen and Ink, with some other great Conveniences, particularly for the Gentlemen. There are two Rooms; one on the Walks, which I found very necessary and comfortable to me in bad weather; the other on the other Side, in Sussex, which are seldom troubled but in the Evenings. The company go to these Rooms alternately each Evening to pay at Cards, or converse together, as at Bath; and there is a Ball once a Week at each Room; on Tuesdays at that on the Walks, and on Fridays at the other; the

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expenditure of which is Half a Crown Entrance for each Gentleman, and One Shilling each Lady; and this I must own I think a much better Method than subscribing Two Guineas, as at Bath, especially to Persons who stay but for a short Time, as it is no Expence but when you go. There is likewise the Gentlemen's Coffee House on the Walks, kept by a very decent Woman, where you likewise subscribe Five Shillings, and where the political and other Disputes between the Gentlemen (some of them, I'll assure you, very high Characters) are particularly entertaining and amusing. Then there is the Bookseller's Shop, kept by a very facetious, intelligent Man, where you subscribe as to the great Rooms, have what Books you please home to your Lodging to read, and there being a great and well-chosen Variety, I found it particularly useful and agreeable to me in bad Weather.

There is likewise a Collection made by some Person of the Company for the Clergyman, from Half a Guinea to Two Guineas for each Family. This Gentleman performs Service twice every Day, and is very kind in procuring us as many excellent Sermons as possible, from the dignified and other Clergy, who visit

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this Place. There is likewise a Collection and voluntary Subscription for a Dissenting Minister here, a very well behaved Gentleman. Mr. Derrick is, I find, Master of the Ceremonies here, as at Bath, and is supported, as there, by having a Ball at each Room, Tickets for which are 5s. each, but he gives so much Satisfaction in this important Office, that very few give him less than Gold for his Tickets; my being mostly on the Hill, and his endeavouring, as I hear, to establish himself at Bright-helmstone, as here, which gives some Umbrage, has made his appearance like that of a Comet to me. There is another small Subscription to the Sweeper of the Walks (which are kept very clean) of One Shilling each Person, or as much more as the Generosity of the Donors please, but not less. At going from hence, you give the Water-Dippers, a set of very decent Women, who constantly attend at the Well, to serve you with your Water from the Spring, from a Crown to a Guinea (or more if you stay a long Time); and likewise to the Waiters of the Rooms, who, I find, have nothing but what the Company please to give them at going away, and which, I find is according to the Rank of the Family.

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These, my dear Friend, are the Whole of the Regular expected Taxes on you, but Persons of particular Distinction and Inclination frequently give Breakfasts, Tea-drinking, and Balls, either public, or in Parties; and I must assure you, that at all the Places these Ceremonies are conducted in a very pleasing and agreeable Manner.

The Provisions here are, in general, excellent, particularly the Poultry, which are likewise very cheap; almost every Body go to Market here themselves, all the Market Women standing at the Steps at the End of the Walks, from Seven till Ten in the Morning, in such a Manner that you are almost obliged to pass through them : they behave with great Civility. There is likewise a Fish Market facing the Walks, almost every Day in the Week, where the Fish are, in general, extremely fresh, being brought in the Night from four or five different Places on the Coast, all within thirty Miles Distance; as are the Wheat Ears, which are at this Time very fine, and in great Plenty; and we have a good old Woman, the best Pastry-Cook in England—I wish you was here to eat one of her Chicken Pyes and Cheese-cakes.

The Post comes in every Day, except

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Monday, about Eleven in the Morning, and goes out every Day except Saturdays and Mondays, at Five in the Afternoon. They have been this Season particularly well accommodated by two Flys, which run in Opposition to each other, which carry four Persons only, and are never more than five Hours or five and a half on the Road; One sets out at Five in the Morning, from hence, and gets into London at Eleven, and returns from thence at One. The other sets out from London at the same Time in the Morning, and returns from hence at One; by which the Company have an Opportunity of having Turbots, Fruit, &c., in Time for Dinner, and of sending Wheat Ears from hence to their Friends in London: The Fare is Half a Guinea. The common Stage Coach sets out every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, for London, at Six in the Morning, and arrives about Two; returns every Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday, at the same Hours. The Carriers, of which there are three, set out every Monday and Thursday from hence, at Nine in the Morning; and from London every Tuesday and Friday, at about Three in the Afternoon. The particular Manufactory of this Place is a vast variety of

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beautiful Works, most excellently fitted up in various Sorts of Wood, of which (besides Plenty of Milliners and Toy-Shops) there are several Shops on the Walks.

I hope, dear George, you will think me pretty precise, as I promised you. Any other Particulars you shall desire I will inform you of, or explain, but can think of no others at present; hope soon to have the Pleasure of drinking a Bottle with you, and am

SIR,

Your sincere Friend,

And humble Servant,

MARINUS.

Extract of a Letter from Tunbridge Wells.

July 30, 1773.

This place is extremely full, but the company consists of an odd olio of old maids, lively widows, poluted batchelors, Jews, parsons, and some few nobility, who visit the Wells to wash away sin and iniquity, or rather to cleanse their leprous habits of body, in consequence of irregularity, incontinence, and the excess of every sensual appetite; for unless they are

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invited here for these salutary purposes, it is past my judgement to conceive for what they are wheeled down here.

The place itself appears to me in some parts too much like Hampstead, to deserve the name of a country retreat, and in others (particularly what they call the walks) too much like a gentleman's pantry or dairy, to give rural satisfaction to any one fond of natural simplicity. This extravagant inland hole is surrounded but with waste land, without any thing to make it in the least agreeable but the company. Only picture to yourself how beautiful and enchanting those walks must be, which are paved with irregular broken flat tyles, with some few trees confined on one side, and a set of shops little better than shambles, without the least intercourse of free air, or even the sight of a field; and here it is that the company stroll, lounge, laugh, talk nonsense and loll, after supping the waters, which contrary to those of Lethe, bring care to many, by lowering their finances, and increasing the debts of many an honest tradesman, they afterwards fear to meet in town. If any thing invited me to these walks, it was a few pretty milliners, who came here to earn a

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penny. We have a set of players down with us the vilest of all miserables, who meet with no encouragement but from the affable, beautiful Countess of Tyrconnel, who kindly bespeaks a play now and then to keep them from starving. The assemblies, however, make up for this, for on the last night there were seventy-two coaches at the door. Among the company now down are the Dukes of Leeds and Dorset, Earl Tyrconnel and Lady, Lord Mountmorris, Sir John Seabright, Sir Thomas Wilson, &c., &c.

George Selwyn to Lord Carlisle.

Almack's, 26 July, 1774.

Tunbridge is, in my opinion, for a little time in the summer, with a family, and for people who do not find a great deal of occupation at their country house, one of the prettiest places in the world. The houses are so many bijouxz made up for the occasion, so near the place, so *agreste*, and the whole an air of such simplicity, that I am delighted with it, as much as when my amusements were, as they were formerly, at the Rooms and upon the Pantiles, which are now to me detestable.

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*Lord Loughborough*¹ to *Mr. Eden*.²

Bath, 6th Sept. 1786.

It has been a great mortification to me to be obliged to pass so much time at Tunbridge neither amused nor employed, tho' I have the satisfaction to find that the waters have been of great service to Ly. L. Ld. Mansfield I am afraid will not do equal credit to them this year, their powers as to him become less effectual every season. Very few of your acquaintance or of mine have been at Tunbridge this year and the place has been altogether uninteresting.

Lady Jerningham to her daughter, *Lady Bedingfield*.

Friday, June 18 [1802].

What is called the season here began yesterday, and makes the place pleasanter. It Consists in having musick for an Hour, three times a day, on the Pantiles to facilitate the digestion of the water; from nine till ten in

¹ Alexander Wedderburn, afterwards first Earl of Rosslyn.

² From the original letter (hitherto unpublished) in the possession of A. M. Broadley, Esq.

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the morning, one to two, and seven till eight. There is a Harp and several wind Instruments. The place begins to look like a public Lounge, and Company is daily arriving.

Samuel Rogers to Sarah Rogers.

Tunbridge : 13th Octr. 1805.

You will no doubt be surprised to receive another letter from this Castle of Indolence; but here I have remained (with only two short flights to town) partly from my own dilatory nature, but still more from my companion's, till I begin to despair of ever moving till Mount Zion and Mount Ephraim are loosened from their foundations. A set of people so warm-hearted, so distinguished for talent and temper, were perhaps never assembled before. Our happiness was the subject of hourly congratulation from each to each, and the unfeigned regret with which we have parted is the best proof of it. This morning, after breakfasting together, we lost the Beckfords, who are gone to Eastbourne, and to-morrow we set off for Lord Robert Spencer's. On the way we shall pass a day or two at Brighton, where I hope to see Patty and her nursery, and also the Chinnerys, and we shall at Worthing just look



From a painting by Hoppner]

LADY JERNINGHAM

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in upon the Jerseys. Perhaps you know that the late Lord J. died here, when we were in the very act of setting off on a party of pleasure. We have had music every evening; your friend Moore and Miss Susan Beckford have charmed us out of ourselves, and our mornings have passed away in curricles and sociables and four. Our morning excursions have generally mustered twenty, and you will smile to hear that I have exhibited daily as a curricie driver. Mr. Jodrell's barouche was an addition to us for a week, and he seemed a very good-humoured man.

Lady Jerningham to Lady Bedingfield.

Tunbridge Wells, July 1 [1806].

. . . We are not full of fine company here, but there is perhaps more Sociability than usual, so that every evening there are meetings at the Rooms or in private Houses. And the Hours are delightful: Dinner at four, meeting a Little after seven, and parting before eleven, so that Tunbridge is Like a Large Convent, every one asleep in their beds before twelve. . . .

To-night is the first regular Ball. On Thursday there was a hop at the Rooms,

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begun by your Father and Lady Boyne. He is quite well and in great spirits; this place and the Company of this year particularly suits him.

Mary Lamb to Mrs. Randal Norris.

Hastings, June 18, 1823.

We took our places for Sevenoaks, intending to remain there all night in order to see Knole, but when we got there we chang'd our minds, and went on to Tunbridge Wells. About a mile short of the Wells the coach stopped at a little inn, and I saw "Lodgings to Let" on a little, very little house opposite. I ran over the way, and secured them.

CHAPTER VI

A DAY AT TUNBRIDGE WELLS IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

TUNBRIDGE LIFE

1.

“ALL you that wish the world to learn,
To Tunbridge Wells repair-a,
Where you will see more in a day
Than elsewhere in a year-a.
Not that our numbers do surpass
What you may elsewhere find-a,
But here no mortals you can meet
An hour in a mind-a.

2.

“At eight o’clock they’re wondrous fond,
At nine they’ll hardly know ye,
At ten perhaps you’re made their joke,
At Church they’ll fav’r show ye,
For lest their thoughts should fix on prayer,
They ev’ry one will greet-a
With, how do you do? are you a player?
And, where shall we two meet-a?

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3.

“ At twelve they to the well repair,
Of Lethe drink so deep-a,
That tho’ you think you have ’em fast,
They’ll no appointment keep-a.
A turn they walk; a Raffle throw,
Tho’ nought they e’er shall gain-a,
Unless they leave such trifling sport,
And throw a merry main-a.

4.

“ The next two hours as chance directs,
In play their time is spent-a,
At Hazard, Basset, or Quadrille,
Scarcely with all content-a.
For Rowly-Powly, noble game,
Their eyes and ears invite-a,
And Pass and No Pass is a sound
Which gives them true delight-a.

5.¹

“ At five the Church bell rings ’em out
Where custom makes them pray-a,
But with how much devotion fix’d
I’ll not pretend to say-a.

6.

“ At six the walks and walls are clear’d,
And all the Belles are seated,
At Upton’s, Morley’s, or at Smith’s,
With tea and tattle treated;

¹ The first four lines of this stanza are missing from the copy from which the verses are taken.



From a drawing by Dodd]

TUNBRIDGE WELLS. A VIEW FROM FRANT FOREST

A Day at Tunbridge Wells

For to do justice to the Beaux,
In scandal they ne'er deal-a,
For each one's of himself too full
To mind the Commonweal-a.

7.

“From six till ten they dance or play,
Or Punch's grace attend-a,
Oh! that his sage rebukes would make
Them their wild ways amend-a.
What's after that among them done
Judge as you can the best-a;
But sure 'twere wise if with my muse
They all would go to rest-a.”

Almost without exception, everybody who went to Tunbridge Wells conformed to Beau Nash's first rule, that every visitant should live in public; and the great man's injunction—which endured for some decades after his death—was the more willingly obeyed since the lodging-houses were far from comfortable. “They were merely places of accommodation for eating and sleeping,” Amsinck has recorded; “and, for the most part, the temporary inhabitants sought no further space in them than what was physically necessary for these purposes.” The rest of the day was spent on the Walks, in the Rooms, at Chapel, or in excursions to places of interest in the neigh-

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bourhood. Nash allotted to every hour its special occupation, and to this programme every one, wealthy or poor, nobleman or citizen, adhered. So it happened that every one at "The Wells" did exactly what every one else did, and at the same time. The company need not have done so, of course; they might have sat in their apartments and read; they might have taken long walks; a number of things might have been done by them at an hour different from that at which the other visitors were doing them. Few, however, struck out a line for themselves: like sheep they followed their leader. Indeed, for the most part, they went to the watering-places with the fixed determination to do as the rest of the world there did. The fact is, that, in spite of all that has been said and written to the contrary, the Englishman and Englishwoman of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, especially those whose position was assured, were gregarious. Those, on the other hand, who were not sure of their social standing, or who had no social standing at all, could not resist the temptation to fraternise with those above them in station. This was then no difficult matter, for those who went to the spas were willing to have

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a change of acquaintances as well as a change of scene. It was easy, therefore, for a citizen at Bath or Tunbridge Wells to mix in good company; but he was a fool to be by this unduly elated, because it did not constitute a claim to be recognised elsewhere. "A maxim universally prevails among the English people, namely, to overlook and wholly neglect, 'on their return to the metropolis, all the connections they may have chanced to acquire during their residence at any of the medicinal wells,'" Smollett wrote in *Ferdinand Count Fathom*. "And this distinction is so scrupulously maintained, that two persons who lived in the most intimate correspondence at Bath and Tunbridge shall, in four-and-twenty hours, so totally forget their friendship as to meet in St. James's Park, without betraying the least token of recognition; so that one would imagine those mineral waters were so many streams issuing from the river Lethe." Sometimes the unwritten law was broken. There is a story told of a great nobleman who at "The Wells" became acquainted with a man of inferior station, a pleasant enough person whom he met frequently at the watering-places. Some time after this individual had

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the folly to address the peer in a London street, when his Lordship courteously assured him he did not know him. "But, my Lord," the man persisted, "you knew me at Tunbridge Wells." "Ah!" said his Lordship, with superb insolence, "then I shall doubtless know you again—at Tunbridge Wells."

To-day people read more than they did when the majority spelt but indifferently, and they find congenial occupation in many sports and exercises. The men of those days cared nothing for walking, took little exercise, and did not know of such things as golf, cricket, tennis, and football: they found their amusement almost solely in social gatherings, in card-assemblies, in dancing, in song and woman. It is to be hoped that it is not disrespectful to the female sex to say that gallantry flourished in inverse ratio to athletics. The sole occupation then of many men was the pursuit of woman, and numbers came to the watering-places only to indulge this passion—no difficult task, if contemporary writers may be believed.

"This Night, our Author, to divert our Spleen,
'Mongst Crowds and Fools at Tunbridge lays his
Scene,

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Where Beaus and City-Wives in Medley come,
The Brisk Gallant supplies the Husband's room,
Whilst dear harmless cuckold packs up Goods at home."

Thus Thomas Baker in 1703, in the prologue to his play, *Tunbridge Walks, or, The Yeoman of Kent*. It is not surprising, therefore, that scandal should be the main topic of conversation, and even so early as the time of the visit of Catherine of Braganza to Tunbridge Wells, the Duc de Cominges, the French Ambassador at the Court of St. James, who accompanied Her Majesty, should have declared, "They should be called the Wells of Scandal, for they have gone well-nigh to ruining the reputation of all the women and girls (I mean such as had not their husbands with them)."

An interesting account of the spa in the second decade of the eighteenth century is to be found in the now almost entirely forgotten *Familiar Letters* of Edward Ward, author of the *London Spy*, and to this, strangely enough, neither Burr nor Amsinck made any allusion. "The chiefest pastimes, next the old trade of Basket-making, are the four following: Bowling at Rusthall Green, where fools lose their money, and knaves win it; Dancing upon Southborough Green; Walking in the Grove

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where the Ring-doves coo above, whilst the lovers bill below and project all things in order to make themselves happy at the next merry meeting; and Gaming at the Groom-porters, where every one strives to win, whilst the box runs away with the money," Ward wrote. "Lodgings are so dear and scarce, that a beau is sometimes glad of a barn, and a lady of honour content to lie in a garret: the horses being commonly put to grass for the servants to lie in the stable. My landlord was a farmer, and his very outhouses were so full that, having sheared some sheep, he abated me half-a-crown a week to let the wool lie in my bedchamber. The most noble of their provisions is a pack-saddle of mutton and a wheat-ear pie, which is accounted here a feast for a Heliogabalus, and is indeed so costly a banquet, that a man may go over to Amsterdam, treat half a dozen friends with a fish dinner, and bring them back again into their own country almost as cheap as you can give yourself and your mistress a true Tunbridge Wells entertainment. The liquors chiefly produced by this part of the country are beer made of wood-dried malt, and wine drawn out of a birch-tree: the first is infected with

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such a smoaky tang, that you would think it was brewed in a chimney; and every pint you drink, instead of quenching your draught, begets a thirst after a gallon; the latter as 'tis ordered drinks almost like mead, and makes a man's mouth smell of honey."

For the guidance of the company regulations were issued by the Master of the Ceremonies for the time being, and as a specimen the code drawn up by Richard Tyson may be given:—

RULES AND REGULATIONS HUMBLY RECOMMENDED BY THE MASTER OF THE CEREMONIES, TO THE COMPANY RESORTING TO TUNBRIDGE WELLS.

I. That there be two balls every week during the season, on Tuesdays at the Upper Rooms; on Friday at the Lower Rooms; each to begin at seven, and end at eleven. Admission to the balls—*Subscribers*—Gentlemen, 3s. 6d. Ladies, 2s. Children, half-price. *Non-Subscribers*, whether Ladies or Gentlemen, 5s.—Gentlemen change their partners every two dances.

II. Ladies who have precedence of place, take their place according to their precedence before the dance begins; but after, they are to

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stand up in the dance without claiming it. The custom among Ladies of allowing their acquaintance to stand up above them is inconvenient and improper, and those who do it, will be considered as violators of rule and decorum.

III. The Master of the Ceremonies desires the company to come early, that the balls may begin at the usual hour of seven.

IV. That there be a card-assembly every Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Saturday, at each of the Rooms alternately.

V. That on Sunday Evenings, the Upper Rooms be opened for public tea-drinking.—Admission for that evening 1s. each, tea included.

VI. That a band of music be provided by the Master of the Ceremonies, qualified to play at the balls, and appointed likewise to play in the orchestra, which band is to be paid in the following manner, *viz.*, The renters of the Public Rooms to pay *six-pence* out of the money they receive for the admission of every person at the balls, and a general subscription of the company,—every gentleman 10s. 6d. and every lady 5s. A book for which purpose is open in the Rooms.

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VII. That when a party of gentlemen and ladies, should on either of the card-assembly evenings, be inclined to have a dance, and the adjoining room prepared for that purpose, that they pay for the room £1 11s. 6d., refreshments and music not included.

VIII. It is humbly requested of all persons to subscribe to the Rooms, to enable the renters of them to defray the many necessary and heavy expenses attending them.

IX. Besides the two Rooms, the other general places of subscription, are the Circulating Libraries, the Coffee-room, and the Post-office.

X. The Chapel being originally built by subscription, is not endowed with any provision for an established minister, it is hoped, therefore, he may rely with confidence, for the reward of his labours, on those who may reap the benefit of them.

XI. The Water-dippers at the Spring, who are appointed by the Lord of the Manor, have no allowance, but depend on what is given them by those who drink the waters.

XII. The Master of the Ceremonies begs leave to recommend to families on leaving the place

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to give a crown at each of the Rooms, for the waiters.

XIII. It has been an established custom for every lady and gentleman to drop a shilling into the sweeper's box, and as the poor man and his wife constantly attend the Wells, keeping them clean, and have no other means of subsisting, it is hoped that none will refuse to comply with this small and equitable bounty.

No hazard, or any unlawful game to be allowed in the Public Rooms, nor cards on Sunday Evening.

RICHARD TYSON,
Master of the Ceremonies.

The first thing for the visitors to do in the morning was to go to the well, with the real or ostensible purpose of drinking the water. This was given out to those who demanded it by women called "dippers," who were appointed by the Lord of the Manor, and supported by the subscriptions of the company. Apparently these persons held their post for life, and could be removed only for ill-behaviour; and on one occasion there was a battle-royal over this question, which aroused much interest in the locality. "Some years

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ago,"—the narrator is one Tristram, a surgeon practising at "The Wells," and his story will be found in an undated *Concise Guide to Tunbridge Wells*,—"the liberal-minded owner of the Manor laid out a large sum in building and setting up a suitable pump-room and two large baths; but as the spring was a public one, the old dispensers of the water could not be dispossessed. War to the knife began between them and the more juvenile ones inside, the outsiders representing to the drinkers that the water had lost half its virtue in passing through pipes and pumps . . . and as they had some truth on their side, they very soon gained the day; the pump-room was turned into a shop, and the baths were forgotten." After the water was taken, or between the glasses, the company promenaded on the Upper Walk, where the band played between the hours of eight and ten.

There were two Walks, the Upper and the Lower, and these were quite distinct, as an entry in the Register of the Chapel of Ease shows: "July 3, 1728.—Lower Walk levelled and repaired, and gates made to keep horses from coming on the Lower Walk." The Lower Walk was used by tradesmen, and the lower

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orders generally; the Upper Walk was tacitly reserved for the company and the gentry. So clearly was that understood that when, on the occasion of the Prince of Wales's birthday, the Duke of Leeds gave a public tea-drinking and ball to the company, he was able, without fear of interruption, to hold the first part of the entertainment on the Parade. "The tables were spread, according to the numbers to be accommodated, down the Walks," Amsinck has recorded; "and it may be noticed, as a singular contrast to the unmannerly intrusion of the present times, that, although the novelty of such a scene might be supposed to yield attractions, and almost to justify some deviation from a rigid propriety, there never was any advance on the part of the lower classes to disturb the comfort of the meeting."

"But then the next Morning, when *Phæbus* appears,
And with his bright Beams our glad Hemisphere cheers,
You rise, dress, get shav'd, and away to the *Walks*,
The Pride of the Place, of which ev'ry one talks.
There, I would suppose you a-drinking the *Waters*,
Didn't I know that you care not for any such Matters,
But to see the fine Ladies in their *Déshabille*,
A Dress that sometimes the most studies to kill.

"The Ladies you see, aye, and Ladies as fair,
As charming, and bright as you'll see anywhere :



H.R.H. THE PRINCE OF WALES

[To face p. 244

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You eye and examine the beautiful Throng,
As o'er the clean Walks they pass lovely along;
And if any, by chance, looks a little Demurer,
You fancy, like ev'ry young fop, you could cure her;
Till from some pretty Nymph a deep Wound you
receive,
And yourself want the Cure which you thought you
could give."

Thus John Byrom in *Tunbridgiala*. Invalids, lounging on the Pantiles, compared their symptoms; card-players explained how they should have won over-night—and mentioned the sums they had lost; lovers made their trysts, and others made their arrangements for visits, excursions, parties, and balls. About ten o'clock all went away to breakfast in their lodgings or at a tavern.

"Not so wounded, howe'er, as to make you forget,
That your *Honour* this Morn has not breakfasted
yet,
So to Morley's you go, look about, and sit down;
Then comes the young Lass for your Honour's half-
crown;
She brings out the Book, you look wisely upon her;
'What's the Meaning of this?'—'To Subscribe, please
your Honour.'
So you write, as your Betters have all done before
ye;—
'Tis a Custom, and so there's an End of the Story."

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A few went further afield for their repast, probably to the High Rocks, after that natural curiosity had been popularised by the interest shown in it by James II. "Here," said Samuel Derrick, who paid his first visit to "The Wells" in 1762, "is a cottager, who has a wife and a large family, supplies you with excellent cheer at a very reasonable rate; and you can imagine hardly anything more delightful than a few select friends, seated in the midst of these rocks, with horns and clarionets; the music of which is enchantingly echoed and re-echoed on every hand." Those who did not venture so far away, went to the Church, where a short service was performed, not probably impelled thereto by any devotional fervour, but because it was the fashion. "Possibly there was as little religion in the chapel," said a resident, "as in the ball-room."

"And now, all this while, it is forty to one
But some Friend or other you've happen'd upon :
You all go to Church upon hearing the Bell,—
Whether out of Devotion, yourselves can best tell;—
From thence to the Tavern to toast pretty *Nancy*,
Th' aforesaid bright Nymph, that had smitten your
Fancy :
Where Wine and good Victuals attend your Commands,
And Wheatears, far better than *French Ortolans*."

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After church, some of those who did not go to the Tavern would saunter on Mount Ephraim or Mount Sion. "The Company," said Defoe, "walk upon the Two above-named Hills, after they have drank the Waters, and divert themselves with Bowls, Dancing, and other Exercises, as the Weather and the Physicians will permit and prescribe." A few would stroll so far as the Cold-Bath at Rust-hall, which, built at considerable expense by James Long, was, Burr has declared, "esteemed equal to any in the kingdom, being plentifully supplied with rock water from neighbouring hills." "The Bath," says the same authority, "was at first adorned with amusing water-works, and had a handsome and convenient house over it, in every room of which was something curious, calculated to divert and surprise the company. The ground and gardens belonging to the Bath were elegantly laid out, and embellished with fountains, and other ornaments suitable to the place; in short, the whole was most completely disposed for a scene of amusement." In spite of these attractions, however, the Bath did not continue to attract, and before the century had waned it had been allowed to fall into a state of decay.

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Most of the company, however, were again to be found on the Pantiles, listening, from twelve to two o'clock, to the band of flutes, haut-boys, and violins. "Here," wrote Samuel Derrick, "is a beautiful row of large flourishing trees, that yield a delightful shade; and in a small wooden gallery upon the Walks there are four or five fiddlers scraping away, during the hours of water-drinking; but I cannot say they yield very delightful strains." "This I do," said a friend of Derrick, when giving a subscription for the band, "because I love music, out of which harmony ought to arise: yours produces nothing but discord." The music, however, was not the attraction which brought people to the Pantiles, and if the orchestra was indifferent or worse, probably few noticed it. Before the Ladies reappeared on the Walks at noon, they had changed their *négligé* costume for full dress morning attire. "After the Appearing is over at the Wells (where the Ladies are in an Undress), and at the Chapel, the Company go home," Defoe noted in 1724; "and, as if it was another Species of People, or a Collection from another Place, you are surpriz'd to see the Walks covered with Ladies completely dress'd and

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gay to Profusion; where rich Cloaths, Jewels, and Beauty, dazzle the Eyes from one End of the Range to the other." During these hours those who were taking the cure would drink their second glass of the water; the rest would while away some time gazing at the windows of the shops under the portico, where Tunbridge ware, jewellery, china, and millinery, were exposed to tempt all and sundry to enter and purchase. Some would go to try their fortune raffling at the toy-shop; others to the Library¹ to turn over the new novels and look at the paper: almost all there would read the verses written by the visitors, placed for perusal in a prominent place.

Students of the social life of the eighteenth century are well aware that a favourite pastime of the fashionable world was the composition of *vers de société* and *vers d'occasion*. It is probably no exaggeration to

¹ There were in the latter half of the eighteenth century two Libraries, J. Sprange's and Nash's. Later Sprange's became Elliott's, and Mr. A. M. Broadley possesses book-plates also of the Libraries of E. Baker and Knight. In the early Victorian days there was the establishment of John Colbran, whence were issued guides to Tunbridge Wells, edited by James Phippen. Sprange in earlier days also published guides to the spa.

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state that during that era more minor verse was written in England than at any other time, and how poor most of it must have been may be surmised after reading the volumes comprising *The New Foundling Hospital for Wit*, wherein, it is but natural to suppose, the best specimens were brought together. In that collection may be found poems by Christopher Anstey, Mark Akenside, Gray, Hanbury-Williams, and William Whitehead, one of the worst of Poets-laureate; but by far the greater part of the six volumes is filled with the output of anonymous amateur scribes, and such names at the foot of verses as are known are those of men who certainly were not distinguished as poets, though some of them were famous in other walks of life. We find there some metrical effusions of David Garrick, Horace Walpole, Lord Carlisle, Charles James Fox, Lord Holland, Soame Jenyns, Lord Lyttleton, Charles Yorke, Elizabeth Carter—to name but a few. Nowhere did this pastime of verse-making flourish more than at the spas. “A few minutes are spent by some in making verses, as the waters or genius of the place, or as love and leisure inspire,” wrote the author of the *Concise Guard to Tun-*
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bridge Wells. "These verses (*jeux d'esprits*) are various and occasional, but chiefly complimentary to the ladies in general, or to some particular fair one. A copy of them is usually left at the bookseller's shop, and entered in a book there for inspection and entertainment of the company. This poetical pastime, when confined within the bounds of decorum and politeness, is very pleasing and agreeable, and is always supposed to be exempt of criticism." It is as well that criticism was uncalled for, because it would have been hard put to it to be courteous : as Addison remarked, "The water poets are an innocent race, and deserve all the encouragement I can give them. It would be barbarous to treat these authors with bitterness, who never write out of season, and whose words are useful with the waters." After this kindly comment, it is sad to have to read in *Tunbridgiala* ; or, *Tunbridge Miscellanies for the year 1730*, the following lines, "Occasion'd by seeing two Subscriptions wanting to fill up a Raffle for Addison's Works—

"Ye ever heedless Beaus and Belles,
Who gayly rove at *Tunbridge Wells*
With Pockets full, and vacant Looks,
Raffling for every Toy,—but Books :

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Shou'd *Addison's* immortal Page
(The Glory of his Land and Age)
Want two Subscriptions to be full ?
The World will dare to say you're dull :
Be wise, subscribe your Names in haste
And prove you've *One Pretence to Taste.*"

Most of the verses certainly deserved to be described as innocent, for they dealt, without malice and in a commonplace manner, with the place and the company. Subsequently these effusions were collected in such publications as *Tunbridgiala* and *Tunbridge Epistles*. A short selection, chronologically arranged, from the hundreds of pieces may not be without interest to a generation that leaves the making of occasional verse to the professional poets.

ON MRS. P[OTHI]LL¹

" *Polly*, wanton, gay and airy,
Wild as Buck, or Midnight Fairy,
Blooming like Rose, and bright as Lilly,
So pretty is, and yet so silly;
To death I fret me at her Folly,
Yet more than Life I love my *Polly*.

¹ Mrs. Pothill, a beauty of the day, was in 1719 by one of the poets described as "intolerably fair."

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“ *Letty*,¹ with modest Maiden Air,
Blushing, like Rose, as Lilly fair,
Good-Humour smiling in her Eyes,
Appears so lovely, and so wise,
That her Mind has Thousand Charms.
But Oh! the Heaven in *Letty's* Arms.

(*Without a Title*)

“ Say Muse the names of all the motley throng,
Whom Tunbridge lulls with Country dance and song,
Whom empty Love inflames and Water cools,
Begin, and give a Catalogue of Fools.
Trembling with Palsies, and decrepit age
Let N[as]h stand foremost in the crowded page,
That child of eighty! own'd without dispute
Thro' all the realms of Fiddling absolute;
Alas! old Dotard! is it fit for thee
To couple dancing fools at eighty-three?
Go, get thee to thy Grave, we're tired all
To see thee still, still tottering round a Ball.
But Hark, my Muse, what distant noise approaches?
French horns I hear and rattling sound of coaches!
Lo! with retinue proud from Lewis race
Usher'd by bowing Peers arrives his Grace,
With civil pride our homage he receives,
And nods from side to side to grinning slaves.
There gentle A . . . hb . . . m familiar Bows,
And youthful M . . . ch declines his laurell'd brows
(Him the proud Laurell of th' Olympic game
And Chariot races consecrate to fame.)
There A . . . y pays his Levee sneer,
And for one moment quits his Lovely F . . . r,

¹ Letty was Miss Borwood, a sister of Mrs. Pothill.

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There foreign princes, envoys, plenipo's,
Germans and Russian, Frenchmen, Friends and Foes,
All crowd to catch the Ministerial look
And pay obeisance to th' Almighty D . . . ke.
But who comes here so gallant and so airy ?
Oh ! 'tis the pulvill'd and the gay Sir H . . rr . . y,
Painted for sight and essenc'd for the smell,
In spite of nine and forty he looks well.
Vermillion lends his Cheeks a blushing grace,
And fills up all the furrows of the Face.
O Lady K why are you alone ?
Why were the dear Miss P ms left in Town ?
But for amends here easy L n swims
In loose undress and negligence of Limbs ;
So indolently gracefull you wou'd swear
'Twas Cleopatra's self that saunter'd there.
Nor let us pass the *little face* of Nevill,
Long since styl'd *decent, sensible, and civil*,
And sure that praise was true ;—but why my dear,
So very intimate, so close with F r ?
O happy F . . . ! whose husband roams abroad,
And leaves her eas'd of that ungratefull load,
Leaves her to Love and A y free,
Leaves her to Tunbridge Walks and Liberty !
These are the prime—the rest 'twere long to tell,
Who in the Wilds of Kent and Yorkshire dwell,
Misses and Fops, 'twere tedious to rehearse,
Coxcombs below the Dignity of Verse.
Peace then B by, whom his Name describes,
A clumsy dunce among the Female tribes :
To Joke the awkward heavy Coxcomb tries,
And thinks each Woman that beholds him dies.
Peace to the stale impertinence of Colly,
His old, absurd, and out of fashion'd folly ;

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Peace to a thousand Girls with idiot faces,
Whom yet some fools call Goddesses and Graces;
Peace to the noisy chatt'ring crew who strive
To seem the most transported things alive.
Yet let us pay a compliment to W d,
Ripe as the swelling clusters of the Vineyard,
Happy she smiles with inoffensive joy,
Happy to dance with Monsieur M poix.
More fools appear and more in plenteous crops,
But damn the rest, I'm sick of numb'ring Fops."

THE BEAUTIES OF TUNBRIDGE WELLS DESCRIBED, 1759¹

"Compton still shines with bright and sparkling eyes,
While at her feet the wounded lover sighs,
Like a young rose the cheeks of POWIS glow,
And SWANTON'S breast outvies the new fall'n snow.
Fine ivory teeth let blooming CROCKATT boast.
For coral lips M'KENZIE is the toast.
LINCOLN in shape, PELHAM in air excells,
And DENBIGH'S noble mind her glory tells.
Beauties in each in different shapes appear,
And different charms adorn each lovely fair.
But in bright RICHMOND all the charms you'll find,
Of eyes, cheeks, teeth, lips, breast, shape, air, and
mind.
Nature join'd these in one, and thus with care,
Like ZEUXIS' HELEN, form'd a finish'd fair."

¹ *Water Poetry*, 40.

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THE TRIP TO TUNBRIDGE

“There’s no Man that’s not of *Schismatical* Crew,
But when he’s at *Rome*, will do as they do;
Therefore when I came hither, I propos’d to take
A Pattern from others, and not for to make
Any Rules for my self. I paid all my Fees,
And when I’d done that, was wholly at Ease.
I took a Purge, my Kettle to scower,
And then drank the Waters at a Regular Hour.
I began with one Glass, and soon got to five,
Which made me so perfectly fresh and alive,
That I danc’d, sung and raffled, drank Coffee and Tea,
And from Morning to Night was as brisk as a Bee.
I chose me a Mistress of Wit and Condition,
To whom I presented the following Petition.
‘Pray, Madam, be kind to a Heart full of Love,
‘As an Egg full of Meat. My Passion’s above
Any Art to describe. No one knows what I feel,
From the Crown of my Head, quite down to my
Heel.
Your Eyes are like Suns, your Lips are like Rubies,
And those that say otherwise, are a Parcel of
Boobies.
Dear Chloe, take Pity, and let me not die,
Never any Man loved you better than I.’
But she heard not my Prayer, and gives me no Look,
And such sort of Treatment no Mortal can brook;
I’m forc’d then to leave her, and to flee from the
Place,
And hope you’ll bemoan my pitiful Case.”

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TUNBRIDGE EPISTLES,

FROM LADY MARGARET TO THE COUNTESS OF B——.
1767. EPISTLE IV.

“A Monday it rain’d a great part of the day,
(Which is but a trifle to us that love play)
So we sat ourselves down, for an hour or two,
To taste the delights of a scramble at Loo.
There was I, and my aunt, and that plague Mrs. BLACK,
Who is sure to have all the good cards in the pack,
And the pert affectation of little Miss SLY,
Who knows how to make a good use of her eye;
With these, Lady FRETFUL, that seldom refuses
To think us all cheats, if her Ladyship loses;
And old Sir JOHN GRUMBLE, who, give him but PAM,
Is as still as a mouse, and as meek as a lamb.”

TUNBRIDGE VERSES

O Fons Blandusiae!—HORAT.

“O Precious fount! O chief among
The chiefest blessings here below;
Whose streams have flow’d all pure so long,
And shall as pure for ever flow.

“Oft as the sweet return of *May*
The sure revolving year shall bring,
Thy votaries shall freely pay
Due honours to thy sacred spring.

“When summer suns inflame the air,
And all the town with raging heat,
Here shall the nymphs and swains repair,
And find a charming cool retreat.

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“Thy waters youth in age renew,
Strength to the weak and sickly add,
Give the pale cheek a rosy hue,
And cheerful spirits to the sad.

“And whilst some muse shall raise a song,
With all her power and all her grace,
Justly to tell the splendid throng
That crowd and dignify the place;

“Where health and social pleasures reign,
Where polish'd ease and freedom dwells,
No new or ancient fount shall gain
A greater fame than *Tunbridge Wells*.”

WRITTEN ON THE FIRST VIEW OF TUNBRIDGE WELLS

BY MR. LOCKMAN

“Curious, the bookish man surveying
The shiftings of this gaudy scene;
The tattling, gaming, dancing, praying,
Says, What can this strange medley mean?

“As in each new-found nook he pries,
Amaz'd, he shews a scornful air;
And to himself indignant cries,
This must be, *Vanity*, thy fair.

“Not so the belle, in fashions skill'd,
And a great trav'ler in romance,
To her the walks, balls, play-rooms yield
Raptures, which all her soul entrance.—

A Day at Tunbridge Wells

“ Still as she treads the fairy-round,
And the gay objects re-appear;
Sweet bliss ! (she cries) thy seat I’ve found,
ELYSIUM can be only here.

“ Between this pair, who form the song,
The bard decides thus at first sight :
The belle’s idea may be wrong,
And the pale book-worm’s not be right.”

Some decades after Addison wrote, a change seems to have come over the water poets, whose verses became less and less innocuous, not indeed in form but in matter, malevolent spirit finding in the recreation opportunity to wreak its spite. One Dr. Dent, a clergyman, was the victim of one of the more malevolent spirits.

“ Was Doctor D[en]t
From Heav’n sent,
To prate upon a Sunday ?
Or did his Muse
The Dotard chuse,
To scribble Rhymes on Monday ? ”

“ Lampoons,” said Derrick in 1772, “ are one of the principal amusements of the place. I cannot, indeed, say much for the merits of the writers; but what they want in wit, they make up in gross abuse, and bad poetry. The poor ladies suffer under their hands most

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unmercifully.” Many efforts were made to discover the authors, for the company as a whole felt itself outraged, since those who were not attacked tonight might, as likely as not, be the victims of tomorrow. The secret was, however, well kept; but the suspicion of being responsible for some of the squibs fell upon a physician, described as “an old cynical, ill-tempered fellow, and much uglier than Colonel Chartres, Orator Henley, or the d——l.” He may have been innocent, in which case he is entitled to sympathy, because he was in the following verses severely castigated by one whose name has not transpired but is mentioned by Derrick as “a man of high position, remarkable for his wit and understanding”—

(To the tune of “God Save the King.”)

“ Dr. ———,
’Tis my advice to you,
Burn your lampoons;
Or you will find it true,
When you’re beat black and blue,
You will have cause to rue
Writing lampoons.

“ Wit may correct abuse;
You have no such excuse
For your lampoons :

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Your verse has no pretence
Either to wit or sense;
Dullness and impudence
Are your lampoons.

“Ladies take fright at you;
Men hate the sight of you
And your lampoons :
For on the human race
You reflect such disgrace,
That we read, in your face,
Nature’s lampoon.”

Dinner occupied the rest of the afternoon, after which the company assembled again on the Pantiles from six till eight, the band again performing, and took, maybe, a third glass of water.

“To the *Walks* about seven, you trace back your Way,
Where the Sun marches off, and the Ladies make Day,
What crowding of Charms : Gods—or rather God-
desses !

What beauties are here ! What bright looks, airs,
and dresses !

In the room of the Waters had Helicon sprung,
And the Nymphs of the Place by old Poets been sung,
To invite the Gods hither they would have had Reason,
And *Jove* had descended each Night in the *Season*.”

Some would go to the High Rocks for tea,
and a few might go to take tea or a syllabub

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at the Fish Ponds upon Mount Ephraim, which, though in a neglected state, had again become a reputable, even if not a fashionable or much-frequented, resort. The promenade or the walk was, however, but the prelude to the evening's entertainment, which to most was the brightest item in the day's programme. There were concerts to perform at which the best musical performers often came down from London; there was the theatre on certain nights; and at the Rooms balls or card-assemblies. To these every one went, who was not debarred by an extreme of age or youth.

The theatre at Tunbridge Wells never bulked so largely in the public eye as at Bath. The first record of any dramatic entertainment at the Kentish spa is a performance in 1737 by an itinerant group of comedians. Later "Canterbury" Smith—not to be confused with the better-known "Gentleman" Smith—visited the town; and in 1753 a member of his company, named Peters, rented a large room attached to an inn. In 1770 Mrs. Baker erected a theatre on Mount Sion, near Cumberland House; but this subsequently she pulled down, and built another, partly with the old material, close by the Sussex Inn. "There is a playhouse here;



THE THEATRE, TUNBRIDGE WELLS

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it is very small, but often well attended," George Saville Carey wrote in 1801. "It may appear the more so, because a few people will make a full house, for, when you are in it, you feel as if the actors and actresses were tumbling into your lap, and they are generally of that description, which, like their scenes, are best seen at a distance. The mistress of this company is named *Baker*, whose *soft* and *gentle* manners have been in the theatrical *oven* so long, that she becomes *crusty* whenever you ask her a civil question." In spite of her manners Mrs. Baker must have done well, for the year after Carey's visit, she again rebuilt the theatre, and on a more extensive scale, at a cost of £1650. The new theatre, which was opened on July 8, 1802, had a seating capacity of £60-£70 a night, the prices charged being, Boxes 4s., Pit 2s., Gallery 1s. The actors and actresses, occasionally reinforced by a London "star," were described as forming "a very respectable company." The theatre was rented by William Dowton, a man who later made his mark on the metropolitan stage, and under his management were given three performances a week from July to October; the company performing

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during the rest of the year at Maidstone, Rochester, and Canterbury.

All society gambled in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; much money changed hands over bets, but far more was won and lost at the card-table. So great was the damage done by the organisers of "hells," not only in London but at the fashionable spas, that in 1739 it was deemed essential—and that, too, in an age when legislation was not grandmotherly—to pass an Act of Parliament to prevent excessive and, above all, fraudulent gaming. Private lotteries were barred, and the games of faro, basset, and hazard, were prohibited, under heavy penalties—fines of two hundred pounds for each person concerned in setting up the game, fines of fifty pounds for each player. Nothing was easier than to drive a coach-and-four through this particular enactment: faro, basset, and hazard could not be played; but it was easy to invent other games. The Legislature endeavoured to remedy its blunder by passing a supplementary Act in the following year, whereby Passage, or any game with dice, known at the time or subsequently to be invented, was forbidden. There is a large section of the human race that

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cries aloud for the opportunity to indulge in games of pure chance, and there are always people ready to provide such opportunities, at a profit to themselves. It is necessary to know something about the methods of those who set up these games to realise how it is worth their while to do so. The man who collects a party for whist, or any of its various forms, has no more chance of winning than any other player. In such games as require a banker, it will be found that there is always an advantage to the bank, which, while it may have a run of bad luck, must in the end win handsomely. Even in these days of scientific calculations, no theory has yet been devised whereby a bank, if it has a limit whereby it prevents perpetual doubling, can in the long run be defeated. Punters every year go to Monte Carlo to break the bank by means of a system : invariably they return convinced that they would have won if they had taken longer over the study of their method. Players with systems are beloved by the authorities at Monte Carlo, where, the curious have noted, money is taken away only by those who stake their money in blissful ignorance of rhyme and reason.

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At Tunbridge Wells, after the second Act of Parliament received the royal assent, new games were invented to evade the law. Roulet, or Roly-Poly, and Marlborough's Battles, came into vogue, and, above all, E O, a description of which Edmond Hoyle has handed down to generations that know it not. "An E O table is circular in form, though in general about four feet in diameter," he wrote. "The extreme circumference is a kind of counter or *dépôt* for the stakes, marked all round with the letters E and O, on which each adventurer places his money according to his inclination. The interior part of the table consists first of a kind of gallery, or rolling place, for the ball, which, with the outward parts above, called *dépôt* or counter, is stationary or fixed. The most interior part moves on an axis or pivot, and is turned about with handles, while the ball is set in motion round the gallery. This part is generally divided into niches or interstices, twenty of which are marked with the letter E, and the other twenty with the letter O. The lodging of the ball in any of the niches distinguished by those letters determine the wager. The proprietors of the tables have two bar holes, and are obliged to take all bets

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offered either for E or O; but if the ball falls into either of the bar holes, they win all the bets upon the opposite letter, and do not pay to that in which it falls, an advantage in the proportion of two to forty, or five per cent. in their favour." This game, so advantageous to the banker, was invented by a man called Cook, who, in conjunction with one A——e, the proprietor of the Tunbridge Wells Assembly-room, set up a table in that place. The profits during the first year were very great, and A——e saw no reason, except common honesty, which troubled him not at all, why Cook should in future share these. He therefore turned the inventor away and played the game the next year entirely in his own interest. Cook, however, was not content quietly to be ousted, and Goldsmith states, "he and his friends hired the crier to cry the game down." The only way for A——e to prevent this was to secure Nash's influence, which, to the *Beau's* shame, he contrived to do by a promise of a fourth share of the bank.

Hearing of this, Cook now endeavoured to outbid his rival by offering half the profits of his bank, but this Nash declined, being at all events honest enough to stand by the arrange-

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ment he had made. Thereupon, in another house, Cook set up his table, and no doubt flourished exceedingly. In the end Nash, after the manner of the modern company-promoter, induced A——e and Cook to join their interests, and divide the proceeds into three parts, one of which should come to him. The amalgamation was carried out, and all was well—save that the two rogues defrauded the better-known one, and gave him a sum of money which became less every year until 1745, when a new Act broke up the confederacy.

Nash was fixed in his determination not to allow any E O table to be set up anywhere but in the Rooms. Hearing that the landlord of a lodging-house had ordered a table from London for a family to which he had let some apartments, the *Beau* at once went there under the pretext of engaging another suite of rooms. During his visit he saw the table, and asked naïvely to which of the Rooms it belonged, and if the person for whom it was borrowed was too ill to go to the public place. The landlord answered: “I bought the table for the use of my lodgers, who are very well, but do not care to go to the Rooms.” “Why,” said the Master of the Ceremonies, “what a puppy you must

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be, not to know that the principal support of 'The Wells,' your houses, and every beneficial circumstance attending the place, depends entirely on the company's frequenting the Rooms. When once that ceases, be assured 'The Wells' will drop." Having condescended to give this explanation, he resumed his autocratic manner, and gave orders that the table should be broken up. That for the prosperity of the place it was essential the Rooms should be the usual resort there can be no doubt, for if once people had begun to form private gambling-parties, the disintegration of the society that visited Tunbridge was inevitable.

"But when to their Gaming the Ladies withdraw,
Those Beauties are fled, which when walking you saw;
Ungrateful the Scene which you there see display'd,
Chance murd'ring those Features which *Heaven* had
made.

If the fair Ones their Charms did sufficiently prize,
Their Elbows they'd spare for the sake of their Eyes;
And the Men too,—what Work! it's enough, in good
faith is't,

Of the nonsense of *Chance* to convince any Atheist."

These lines of Byrom show that early in the seventeenth century gambling at Tunbridge Wells was not confined to one sex, and indeed

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the ladies were as eager to taste the excitement to be found at the tables as the men. "The town very empty and no sign of money anywhere, but at the Bath and Tunbridge, where the ladies shake the elbow," Francis Hopgood wrote to Thomas Coke, so early as 1696. Not all played at the public tables, however, and many private parties were made up. It was even rumoured that cards were frequently played before the hour of dinner. As the years passed, whist became more and more popular, and then the amusement could be indulged in by those whose purses were not heavy enough to sustain a run of bad luck at E O and other games of pure chance. "Few places are pleasanter for a couple of months than Tunbridge Wells," Samuel Derrick remarked in 1762. "You are here with the most elegant company in Europe, on the easiest terms; and you need be at no loss for a party of Whist or Quadrille with respectable personages, at any price, from a shilling to a guinea a corner."

CHAPTER VII

TUNBRIDGE WELLS SINCE THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

THE discovery of the efficacy of sea-bathing dealt a blow to all the inland watering-places, and Tunbridge Wells was as much affected as any place when Brighton developed from a fishing village into a fashionable resort. A writer speaking of Brighton at the beginning of the eighteenth century remarked that it would cost eight thousand pounds to protect the coast against encroachment by the sea, and "if one were to look on the town," he added, "[this sum] would seem to be more than all the houses are worth." Twenty years later Defoe speaks of cornfields that came down almost to the shore; but he mentions that a fine lawn, called the Steine, was the resort of the company for walking in an evening—which shows that some people went there even at this early date. Indeed, every week

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a packet sailed from Brighton to Dieppe, a route to Paris which, though longer than that through Calais, was much cheaper. A regular season began about 1730, but it was not until after 1750, in which year Dr. Richard Russell wrote a treatise advocating the use of sea-water in diseases of the glands—“*Dissertatis de Tabæ Glandulari et de Usu Aquæ Marinæ in Morbis Glandularum*”—that (as a satirical writer of the day put it), deserting Bath, Tunbridge Wells, Epsom, and the other inland watering-places—

“ . . . all with ails in heart or lungs,
In liver or in spine,
Rush'd coastward to be cur'd like tongues,
By dipping into brine.”

Presently the change in fashion was chronicled by Cowper in his poem, “Retirement”—

“ Your prudent grandmammas, ye modern belles,
Content with Bristol, Bath, and Tunbridge Wells,
When health requir'd it, would consent to roam,
Else more attach'd to pleasures found at home.
But now alike, gay widow, virgin, wife,
Ingenious to diversify dull life,
In coaches, chaises, caravans, and hoys,
Fly to the coast for daily, nightly joys,
And all, impatient of dry land, agree
With one consent to rush into the sea.”



THE DUCHESS OF KENT AND THE PRINCESS VICTORIA

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Very slowly was the popularity of the inland watering-places undermined, so slowly, indeed, that Burr, the historian of Tunbridge Wells, writing in 1766, enthusiastically supported the project of a turnpike road from Tunbridge Wells to Lewes, because it could not fail, he thought, of establishing a more open and constant communication between "The Wells" and all that part of Sussex. "One advantage most obviously arising from it will be an inducement to the company going to and returning from Brighthelmstone to pass two or three days or a week by the way at Tunbridge, and this will be making that place as serviceable to 'The Wells' in some respects, as it may be esteemed detrimental in others," he wrote. "If, indeed, Brighthelmstone was the superior place, where pleasures abounded in greater perfection than at 'The Wells,' it might be bad policy to open an easier communication between them; but, as Tunbridge has confessedly greatly the advantage of her rival in every respect, she cannot suffer, but must, on the whole, be an infinite gainer by such a close comparison as will, while it sets off her perfections to the greatest advantage, make her adversary's deficiencies but the more

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conspicuous." Burr did not realise that Tunbridge Wells at the time he wrote was at the zenith of its fame : yet such, indeed, was the case. In only five years more, Brighton had already taken a definite place among the resorts for fashionable society. "The Music and entertainments of Bath are over for the season," Melford (in *Humphry Clinker*) wrote to Sir Watkin Phillips, in 1771; "and all our gay birds of passage have taken their flight to Bristol Wells, Tunbridge, Brighthelmstone, Scarborough, Harrogate, &c." In 1782 the Duke and Duchess of Cumberland stayed at Brighton, and in the next year the Prince of Wales paid a visit to his uncle and aunt, and, liking the place very much, returned there during the next season. In 1787 began the building of the Pavilion. On the subsequent history of Brighton there is no need here to enlarge.

Though, then, Tunbridge Wells, at the beginning of the nineteenth century was already on the wane as a fashionable resort, it was not, of course, by any means entirely neglected by visitors. Mary Berry was there in September 1807, and stayed at a house on Mount Sion for some weeks. On one evening during this



MARY BERRY

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visit she went to Lady Donegal's house, and played whist with her hostess, Lord Ellenborough and Lord Erskine. "I don't know," she commented upon the game, "which of the four played worst." The great charm of the place to her was the informality that permitted her to stroll upon the Common at any hour of the day, without hat or gloves, without observation or remark. She was frequently at "The Wells," and in her diary it is recorded that she was there in August 1811, on which occasion she found there Lydia White, and the rival wits, John William Ward and Henry Luttrell. Returning in the same month of the following year, she was there when the news of the victory of Salamanca arrived. The Marquis of Buckingham, who was the first to receive the intelligence, sent a copy of the despatch to each Library on the Parade, where everybody saw them. "In the evening (of August 17) there was a general illumination," Miss Berry recorded in her journal. "The Pantiles were decorated very prettily with branches of ash mixed with flowers and laurels. I had often heard of the beauty of an illumination at Tunbridge, but it very much surpassed my expectations. The effect

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of Mount Sion from the Common, with its rows of houses raised one above another, and all lighted, would have been beautiful, but for the bonfires which they are in the habit here of making, by lighting furze upon the Common in various places. It produces a grand effect of light; but the smoke prevented our seeing the illuminations of the village.”

The Duke of Sussex must have been there for a long time during the year 1820, for, in a letter written on Christmas Day to “Coke of Norfolk,” he mentions that George Keppel had been staying with him for three months, and that he was quite sorry to part with him. It was from “The Wells” that His Royal Highness journeyed to the metropolis on October 29 to pay his respects at Brandenburg House to Queen Caroline, who was on her trial. The witnesses for the prosecution had been so damaged in cross-examination that it was already clear that Her Majesty could not be convicted, and the entire country was agog with excitement as the perjury of the Italian witnesses was exposed. Many of the visitors at Tunbridge Wells sympathised with the Queen, and endeavoured to get up a congratulatory address on her escape from the



H.R.H. THE DUKE OF SUSSEX

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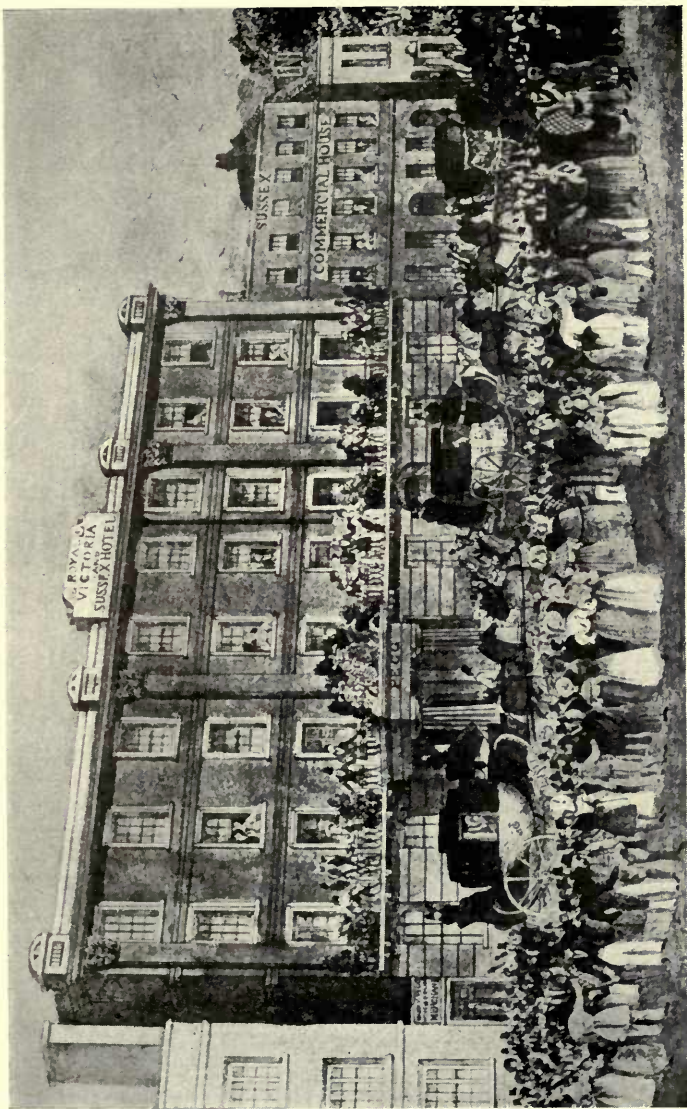
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machinations of her enemies. "That same evening (as the Duke of Sussex returned) there was a ball at the Assembly Rooms," Lord Albemarle, who accompanied His Royal Highness, has put on record, "but at midnight the local authorities, who were of the adverse faction, took away our fiddles, and the Master of the Ceremonies withdrew his countenance from us by retiring. . . . We elected Mr. Douglas Kinnaird our provisional Master of the Ceremonies, and under his tuition went through the figures of the quadrille without instrumental music, humming the tunes, as well as our laughter would enable us to do so." Royalty was again at the spa in 1834 in the persons of the Duchess of Kent and the Princess Victoria, staying at the big house in Calverley Park, which was afterwards the Calverley Hotel. "To Tunbridge Wells we also went, living at a house called Mount Pleasant, now an Hotel. Many pleasant days were spent here, and the return to Kensington in October or November was generally a day of tears," thus the Queen in 1872 recalled the place, from which she had eight-and-thirty years earlier, on September 14, 1834, written to her uncle the King of the Belgians. "We

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had a very pretty party to Hever Castle yesterday, which perhaps you remember, where Anne Boleyn used to live, *before she lost her head*. We drove there, and rode home. It was a most beautiful day." The Duchess of Kent was again at Tunbridge Wells in August 1849.

Thackeray, then a boy at Charterhouse, went by coach from the Bolt-in-Tun, Fleet Street, to spend his summer holidays in 1823 at Tunbridge Wells, and in the same year no less a person than William Cobbett spent a night there and found some difficulty in getting away. "By making a great stir in rousing waiters and 'Boots' and maids, and by leaving behind me the name of 'a —— noisy, troublesome fellow,'" he wrote at the time, "I got clear of 'The Wells,' and out of the contagion of its Wen-engendered inhabitants, time enough to meet the first rays of the sun, on that hill that you come up in order to get to Frant, which is a most beautiful little village, at about two miles from 'The Wells.'" Macaulay knew the watering-place well. He had been there in his boyhood, and had spent many hours in Nash's reading-room "in the old corner looking out upon the heath, reading the old novels that lined the shelves." He was



PRINCESS VICTORIA LEAVING TUNBRIDGE WELLS IN A COACH IN 1834

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there for the last time in July 1853, before going abroad, staying, as he wrote to Mr. Ellis, in "a house in a delightful situation. The drawing-room is excellent; the dining-room so much overshadowed by trees and a verandah that it is dark even in the brightest noon. The country looks lovely. The heath is close to the door. I have a very pleasant room for you; a large tub; half-a-dozen of the best sherry, and a dozen of good champagne; and Plato and Lucian." It was there that Macaulay revised his speeches for publication in book-form, which was designed as a counterblast to Vizetelly's unauthorised edition. The next literary visitor, and the last to be mentioned in these pages, was Hawthorne, who spent a few hours there in 1856, and noted the fact in his *English Note-Books*. "The next day was spent at Tunbridge Wells, which is famous for a chalybeate spring," he wrote, "and is a watering-place of note, most healthily situated on a high, breezy hill, with many pleasant walks in the neighbourhood." Thackeray was again at "The Wells" four years after Hawthorne, accompanied by his parents and children, with two puppies called Gumbo and Saidie, after the two nigger boys

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in *The Virginians*. The party stayed in an old wooden house at the foot of Mount Ephraim, and there, for the *Cornhill Magazine*, the great novelist wrote one of the most delightful of the "Roundabout Papers," "Tunbridge Toys"—

"As I look up from my desk, I see Tunbridge Wells Common and the rocks, the strange familiar place which I remember forty years ago. Boys saunter over the green with stumps and cricket-bats. Other boys gallop by on the riding-master's hacks. I protest it is 'Cramp, Riding Master,' as it used to be in the reign of George IV., and that Centaur Cramp must be at least a hundred years old. Yonder comes a footman with a bundle of novels from the library. Are they as good as *our* novels? Oh! how delightful they were! Shades of Valancour, awful ghost of Manfroni, how I shudder at your appearances! Sweet image of Thaddeus of Warsaw, how often has this almost infantile hand tried to depict you in a Polish cap and richly embroidered tights! And as for Corinthian Tom in light blue pantaloons and hessians, and Jerry Hawthorn from the country, can all the fashion, can all the splendour of real life which these eyes have

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subsequently beheld, can all the wit I have heard or read in later times, compare with your fashion, with your brilliancy, with your delightful grace, and sparkling vivacious rattle ?

“ Who knows ? They *may* have kept those very books at the library still—at the well-remembered library on the Pantiles, where they sell that delightful, useful Tunbridge Ware. I will go and see. I wend my way to the Pantiles, the queer little old-world Pantiles, where, a hundred years since, so much good company came to take its pleasure. Is it possible, that in the past century, gentle-folks of the first rank . . . assembled here and entertained each other with gaming, dancing, fiddling, and tea ? There are fiddlers, harpers, and trumpeters performing at this moment in a weak little old balcony, but where is the fine company ? Where are the earls, duchesses, bishops, and magnificent embroidered gamesters ? A half-dozen children and their nurses are listening to the musicians ; an old lady or two in a poke bonnet passes ; and for the rest, I see but an uninteresting population of native tradesmen. As for the library, its window is full of pictures of burly theologians, and their works, sermons, apologies, and so forth. Can

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I go in and ask the young ladies at the counter for *Manfroni*; or, *The One-handed Monk*, and *Life in London*; or, *The Adventures of Corinthian Tom*, *Jeremiah Hawthorn, Esquire*, and *their friend Bob Logic*?—absurd! I turn away abashed from the casement—from the Pantiles—no longer Pantiles, but Parade. I stroll over the Common and survey the beautiful purple hills around, twinkling with a thousand bright villas, which have sprung up over this charming ground since first I saw it. What an admirable scene of peace and plenty! What a delicious air breathes over the heath, blows the cloud-shadows across it, and murmurs through the full-clad trees! Can the world show a land fairer, richer, more cheerful? I see a portion of it when I look up from the window at which I write. But fair scene, green wood, bright terraces gleaming in sunshine, and purple clouds swollen with summer rain—nay, the very pages over which my head bends—disappear from before my eyes. They are looking backwards, back into forty years off, into a dark room, into a little house hard by on the Common here, in the Bartlemytide holidays. The parents have gone to town for two days: the house is all his own and a grim



From a crayon drawing by Daniel Maclise

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WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY
(By permission of Major William H. Lambert)

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old maid-servant's, and a little boy is seated at night in the lonely drawing-room poring over *Manfroni; or, The One-handed Monk*, so frightened that he scarcely dares to turn round."

As it was when Thackeray wrote, so it is now, half a century later. The Common is as beautiful as ever, but the thousand bright villas he saw have since his day multiplied unceasingly. The Pantiles remain, and an orchestra still discourses music from the bandstand; but how many who walk on that parade give a thought to the glory that once was Tunbridge Wells? The watering-place, the resort so dear to the leisured of several generations, is a watering-place still, but the glory has departed with its Balls, its Card-Assemblies, and its Masters of the Ceremonies. Folk in all ranks of life may—nay, most certainly do—go there to-day; but it is for seclusion, not for gaiety; to avoid the Fashion, not to meet it. Perhaps the town is all the better for that. Anyhow, Tunbridge Wells, with something still of an old-world air, is a delightful spot at which to stay a while, away from the bustle, the worries, the duties of town life.

APPENDIX

A ROD FOR
TUNBRIDGE BEAUS,

Bundl'd up at the Request of the

TUNBRIDGE LADIES,

to

JIRK FOOLS INTO MORE WIT

and

CLOWNS INTO MORE MANNERS.

A Burlesque Poem.

*To be published every summer, as long as the rakes
continue their Rudeness, and the gentry their Vertue.*

L O N D O N,

PRINTED, AND ARE TO BE SOLD BY THE BOOKSELLERS OF
LONDON AND WESTMINSTER,

1701

A ROD FOR TUNBRIDGE BEAUS,
BUNDL'D UP AT THE REQUEST OF THE
TUNBRIDGE LADIES, &c.

IN the dull Time of long *Vacation*,
When each Man seeks his Recreation,
And to some Rural place resorts,
To save his Pence, or mind his Sports,
When Vintners let their Drawers rest,
And grow more humble to their Guest.
When W——s and Lawyers share one fate,
And all the Town looks desolate :
When ev'ry Village on the *Thames*,
Is cram'd with City-Beaus and Dames,
And Vintners send their burly Spouses
To *Hampstead*, to their Country Houses :
When the big Quality from Court,
To *Tunbridge*, or the *Bath* resort,
And all Mankind that are at leisure,
Pursue some distant Rural pleasure :

'Twas then that I amongst the rest,
Sought with retirement to be blest,
And to repair distemper'd Nature,
Would rince my Guts with *Tunbridge* Water.
By th' help of Horses' nimble Heels,
I pac'd and gallop'd to the Wells,
Where I expected I should find
Diversions grateful to my mind,

Appendix

And that there would these Comforts be,
Good Usage, and good Company.
Instead of these, my Muse declare,
The Follies that I met with there :
Ne'er blacked or debase the matter,
Tell truth, it needs no other Satyr.
Let no Dislike thy Envy raise,
To lessen what deserves thy praise;
Nor be misled by Fear or Love,
To flatter what thou shouldst reprove :
Commend the Good, and Scourge the Evil,
So speak the Truth, and shame the Devil.

The Place, in part, by Nature's blest;
What's wanting Art supplies the rest;
Commodious Buildings, where the Great
May dwell in their accustom'd State,
And pleasant Lodgings well design'd,
For all Degrees of Human Kind;
Good Wine and Food of ev'ry sort,
Nor do you pay profusely for't;
Game, for the Sports-man in the Fields;
There's no Diversion but it yields;
For Ladies pleasant Walks and Groves,
Where Ring-Doves murmur out their Loves,
And by their Chooings strike the fence
At once with Love and Innocence.
For Bowlers smooth and pleasant Greens,
For other Gamsters other Means;
As the Oak, Billiards, Cards and Dice.
For ev'ry Fancy some Device,
And to those Pleasures you may join,
Good Musick, Dancing, and Good Wine;
Find Beauties to delight your Eyes,
Some vertuous, and some otherwise.

Appendix

The better Rank that here resort,
From Country, City, or from Court,
Are pester'd with a foppish Crew,
Dispis'd by all, but known to few;
Some from the Divel's *Arse-i-th'-Peak*,
As wild and wicked as *Old Nick*,
Whose fam'd Exploits I will recite,
To do the vertuous Gentry right;
The World true Quality may know,
From that vain Fool the upstart *BEAU*.

The Sober Gentry that appear,
And resort Annually here,
Whose Noble Grandure truly grace,
And add a Lustre to the Place,
Are num'rous, each of good Estate,
By Birth and Education Great.
The Men are Generous and free,
Abounding with Civility.
Respectful and obliging Friends,
To all who Merit recommends;
Kind Patrons, and a sure defence,
To Vertue, Wit and Innocence.

The Female Train appear so bright,
The World scarce needs another Light,
Their darling starry Eyes do even
Out-shine the milky way of Heaven.
Their Beauty so divinely sweet,
Subdues each stubborn Heart they meet,
And makes the gazing Youth to fall
A Victim, not to One but All:
Each lovely Face so wounds his Breast,
He knows not which to like the best,
But finds as he the Train surveys,
In ev'ry Nymph a killing Grace,

Appendix

Who by their free yet awful Mein,
Disclose the Vertues lodg'd within;
Which stifle ev'ry vain desire,
In those who do their Charms admire,
That none dare wish above a Kiss,
Or think of any further Bliss;
So God-like do they move the Sence,
To Vertuous Love and Reverence.

Fall, Muse, from thy ambitious flight,
Hover no more round Beauty's Light,
Lest its bright flame thy Wings should scorch,
Like Bats that sport about a Torch :
Awake, no longer must thou dream
On Beauty, that delightful Theme;
But must from thence descend so low,
As to depict a *Tunbridge* BEAU.
Those self-admiring Fops that hate,
All that is Generous, Good or Great;
Those Pole-eats sweeten'd by Perfumes,
Those Owls disguis'd in Peacock's plumes,
Whom Nature angry brought to Light,
Not to her Power show, but Spight.

The first of these is dubb'd a *SIR*,
And bears the following Character,
Both *Rake* and *Clown* quite void of Sence,
At *Nine-pins* lies his Excellence;
He out-bowls most that use the Place,
And Tips *All-Nine* with such a grace,
No Smith, or Porter, you can send-him,
Dare at this noble Game contend-him,
At *Trap-ball* too he plays most finely,
And Handles Cat-stick so devinely,
The Ladies all admire him for't,

Appendix

And deem him Pindar of the Sport :
When with his Knife he's dug a Hole,
And pois'd his Raiser with his Ball,
Here goes, says he, and *if I like it*,
And very rarely fails to strike it;
Then hits a Hop too most exceeding,
And this is chieftest of his Breeding.
It's true he can at *Cricket* play,
With any living at this day :
And fling a *Coit*, or toss a *Bar*,
With any Driver of a Car :
But *Little Nine-pins* and *Trap-ball*,
The Knight delights in most of all,
Conceiving like a prudent Man,
The other might his Honour stain,
So scorns to let the Publick see,
He should degrade his Quality.

So pritty-fac'd that every Feature,
Seems a meer miracle of Nature;
His Cheeks and Forehead lye as flat,
As an old Oval Dial-plate :
His Nose, indeed, bespeaks him *Roman*,
But stands exactly like a *Gnomen*,
That when the Sun shines fairly forth,
And if he turns his Back to th' North,
The Ladies can discern, they say,
The very minute of the Day,
And find his Phiz as little vary,
As any pocket Watch they carry.
Who likes him, must take pains to woo him,
For Ladies are obnoxious to him;
He loves his homely Self too well,
To think their Charms his own excel;

Appendix

For Fools are always most Conceited,
And Folks deform'd Opiniated.
The pow'r of Beauty he defies,
His Thoughts to Love could never rise;
Yet to show Nature will prevail,
That steers all Creatures by the Tail,
He has a beastly Carnal Itch,
To *Orange Betty's* common Br——ch;
And there we'll leave the Country-Looby,
To mend the *Beau*, and mar the *Booby*.

A *Dubb'd* Crr next, a great Engager,
In Gaming, Merchandise and Wager,
Upon the Stage must play his part,
And show his Courage, and his Art :
Altho' but *Worshipful* his Title,
Which for his Soul is much too little,
He dare to do (I'll make it good)
What Men of *Honour* only shou'd,
The World shall see a City Knight,
As well as Play, can sometimes Fight :

It happen'd on a gloomy Day,
When *Coley's* Almanack does say,
Some angry Planet rul'd the Roast,
And threatened mischief to our Coast;
When whistling Winds, and sullen Sky,
Portended some sad Fray was nigh :
Sir *Harry Querck* to Dice b'ing given,
Regarding not th' ill-boding Heaven,
To hazard went, as we suppose,
To *Win*, altho' it prov'd to *Lose*,
When he had long blind Fortune try'd,
And could not gain her on his side,

Appendix

Which shows he must be wise for certain,
For Fools we know have always Fortune.
Sometimes he Curs'd, then pray'd the Dame;
But to his Aid she never came.
As Sailers tumbling in bad Weather,
Mix always Oaths and Pray'rs together :
Still on he play'd, till burly *Doc*,
The fretting angry Knight had broke,
Who bit his Thumbs, and went away,
Cursing th' ill Fortune of the day :
Thus Gamsters when their Hopes are crost,
And all their ready Cash is lost,
Have no way left to ease their mind,
But belch their Passions to the Wind.
Altho' the Knight does disappear,
The whole Transaction ends not here,
For, lo, there quickly follow'd after,
A Tragick Comedy worth laughter :
Doc, the great Patron of the Place,
B'ing proudly flushed with his Success,
Reflected, being a Man well mettled,
Upon the absent Knight he'd nettled,
Who, by good Fortune, he had broken,
And homewards sent without a Token;
Yet suffer'd his unthankful mouth,
To Scandalize him with the Truth,
And all Men know a true Reflection
Sticks close, and is the worst Detraction :
These Words he spoke, which some may judge,
Arose from some old Peek or Grudge :
But others think, to mend the matter,
Rather from Folly, or Ill-nature,
Says he, *the Bragadocia Knight*,
To pay his Debts would do more right,

Appendix

*Than to come hither like a Tony,
And push off such a sum of money,
Whilst his poor Creditors at LONDON,
For want of it are almost undone.
At this a Knight of no small Honour,
Hating Affronts in this gross manner,
Cast on a Man of Worth not near,
To in his own defence appear :
Says he, remember Master BURLY,
That bites so sharp, and looks so surly ;
What ever envious Words you spake,
Behind a Man of Honour's back,
His Reputation can't asperce,
They reach no further than his A—— ;
Besides ingratefully you use-him,
To win his Gold, and then abuse-him.
This gave no way for other Words,
Nor had they room to draw their Swords :
But Doc as furious as Old-Nic,
Grasp'd mutton-fist on Candlestick,
And flung it with his utmost might,
But miss'd Sir Buck—the worthy Knight,
And with a blow would stun an Ox,
Knock'd down the Keeper of the Box ;
Who rising from beneath the Table,
And peeping up as soon as able,
Cry'd out, with bloody Head, half slain,
Z—nds, Sir, you fling a cursed Main ;
If you Throw on I'm sure I'll stand-out,
For me, the Devil Set your Hand-out.
Sure n'er was such a generous thing,
To pay the Box first time you fling :
I wish, kind Sir, as God shall save me,
You'd kept what you so freely gave me ;*

Appendix

*The thumping Gift methinks was fitter,
For him that has deserv'd it better :
But, after all, I hope my Master,
Remembers what deserves a Plaister.*
Thus the poor Suff'rer kept a mumbling,
But few had time to mind his grumbling,
The Company b'ing most engag'd,
To pacify the Two enrag'd;
Who after many bitter Words,
And mutual Offers at their Swords,
By Friends on both sides interceding,
Both Hero's sav'd themselves from Bleeding;
Like Christians did their Passions smother,
And Friendship vow'd to one another :
So Lovers when they once fall out,
And at each other snarl and pout;
When once their Gall and Passion's o'er,
Love ten times better than before.

But notwithstanding these were friends,
A further danger still attends,
For Murder, or at least Man-slaughter,
Was likely to have prov'd hereafter,
Between Sir *Harry* so misus'd,
And *Doc* that had his Fame abus'd,
And that they both were Men of Honour,
I'll show you in the following manner.

Next Morning when the Sun shone bright,
And was at least five hours height,
When the Well-Walks were full they knew,
Of Ladies, Lords, and God knows who;
The Combatants amongst the rest
Were met, tho' some do think in Jest;

Appendix

Yet both, a Man may safely swear,
To save themselves in earnest were :
But thus the mighty Fight begun,
And ended was almost as soon ;
Sir *Harry* first gave Sword-man's Law,
And bid his Adversary draw,
Saying Sir, *for your base detraction,*
Give me immediate Satisfaction,
Or else before all People present,
I'll spit you like a Lark or Pheasant.
With that the adverse Hero drew,
And tilted like I know not who :
Each for his safety travers'd round,
And like skill'd Fencers chang'd their Ground ;
Right equal was their stout Behaviour,
Begging a clear Stage, and no favour :
Sometimes they would advance slap-dash,
So near their very swords would clash ;
And then confus'd 'twixt Death and Anger,
Jump back for fear of further danger.
The Ladies at the dreadful sight,
Ran squeaking from 'em in a fright,

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The Gentlemen that knew 'em better
Stood off, and some began to titter ;
Tho' had it been their Case 'tis very
Like they'd not have been so merry.
When for some time they'd push'd and parry'd,
And neither, God be prais'd, miscarry'd,
Both equal Courage thus exerting,
And finding little hopes of parting,
Sir *Harry* as he back was stepping,
Happen'd to tumble at a Peppin ;

Appendix

The Apple flung him on his back,
So hard, it made his Shoulders crack;
No wonder such a trifling thing,
The Hero to the Ground should bring,
Since the Forbidden Fruit we find,
Was once the fall of all Mankind.
At this the Gentry ran to Guard,
The fallen Victim from the Sword;
For who knows how far Rage might carry,
A furious Conqu'ring Adversary,
If not to kill, perhaps to Wound,
The helpless Hero on the Ground:
But those that had the Action seen,
Like tender Christians stepping in,
Timely by their kind Aid prevented,
What Mischiefs both might have lamented.
Thus prudent men of Honour knew well,
A publick Place is best for Duel,
What's done in sight o' th' World does shew,
They're not asham'd of what they do:
Indeed 'tis fit in such a Fray,
Some Standers-by should see fair play,
That neither after a foul manner,
Should rob his Foe of Life or Honour:
Besides we cannot but confess,
It makes the Danger somewhat less,
And what brave Hero would be willing,
To barely Fight for sake of Killing?

When both their Courage thus had try'd,
And each himself had Justify'd,
Saving their Honour, and their Blood,
As Christian Adversaries shou'd,
Some Friends with fair prevailing Words,
Engag'd them both to sheath their Swords,

Appendix

And then with painful Intercession,
Made 'em good Friends in spite of Passion.
Thus was the prudent Hero's strife,
Like that between a Man and 's Wife,
Not fight that either should be slain,
But Quarrel to be Friends again.

Next these Beau *Cursitor* succeeds,
Of equal Fame for Gallant Deeds,
Who we (like what he files) may Call,
In Lewdness an Original :
His Courage does all Men defy,
And is as stately as he's high ;
His calves so small, and Smalls so great,
His Back so slender, and so straight,
So thin and tall, that, on my Soul,
A Traytor's head upon a Pole,
Drest up with Art would make a show,
Just like the long-leg'd meagre Beau ;
His clothes so hang upon his Back,
At best he looks but like a Rake,
And in a Peas-field would be taken,
By Country-Whences for *Beau-Mauken* :
Since here you have his Picture right,
Drawn to the Life in *black* and *white*,
We'll now proceed to show his Prowess,
Occasion'd by a Fidler's *Cholis*.

A Tickler of harmonious Strings,
Who sometimes Scrapes, and sometimes Sings,
By the sweet Musick of his Fiddle,
His merry Cant, and taking Whedle,
So well his am'rous part he plaid,
As to enchant, some say, a Maid :

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Appendix

Beau *Cursitor*, well fraught with Clarret,
The Fumes of which had climb his Garret,
Who at such times takes wondrous pains,
To show 'tis furnish'd with no Brains :
Thus soundly pickled in *French* Juice,
He staggers to the Damsel's House,
Where Wine and English Liquores brew'd
Of Malt, were sold for humane Good,
Which drew the Rural Slaves from Plough,
From treading Hey and Barly-Mow,
And Swains and Shepherds from their Herds,
With sun-burnt Looks, and bristled Beards,
To wet their Whistles with her Liquor,
And make their heavy Souls the quicker.
A Crowd of these were got together,
With Faces Tan'd like Bullocks leather,
Roaring out Country-Songs and Catches,
Over their belly Jugs and Gotches ;
Sometimes the *Children in the Wood*
Was sung, till some both Cry'd and Spew'd ;
And then the *Pie sat in the Pear-tree*,
Was bawl'd so loud it wou'd have fear'd-ye,
And when that good old Ditty's done,
The *Fox, we'll Catch him Boys anon*,
As they were thus in merry mood,
Consuming Malt for th' publick Good,
The Fidler (nay, but hold a little,
I should have found some other Title ;
However pardon me this time,
And when 'twill fairly come in Rhime,
I'll make amends, and with submission,
Will call you by and by Musician)
Was Courting in a room hard by,
Dandling his Mistress on his thigh,

Appendix

And to engage her fickle Mind,
Was singing, *Oh, my dear, my kind.*
Whilst all thus merrily were sporting,
Some Drinking, Singing, and some Courting,
Who should step Drunk into the Hall,
But long-leg'd Beau Original,
Who we, to make the Rhime concur,
Do sometimes call *Beau Cursitor* ;
For Rhime delights some Readers better
By half, than Reason does in Metor ;
Besides, 'twill tickle these my Rakes,
And cure the Wounds my Satyr makes :
Yet has it a tormenting Force,
And make 'em, tho' it heals, smart worse.
So *Indian* Planters when they Scourge,
Those Slaves that do their anger urge,
With Brine they vex their wounded Hides,
Which heals, but yet torments their Sides.

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Next Morn the Beau at *Wells* appear'd,
Amongst the rest of th' foppish Herd ;
Crowdero had his Suff'rings told,
To his own Brother stout and bold,
A Master of the String and Bow,
But came not there his Skill to show,
Who scorn'd to play in publick manner,
But was a Fidler of some Honour,
Who angry such ill Usage shou'd,
Be offer'd to his Flesh and Blood,
Advanc'd, and boldly ask'd the Beau,
What made him Beat his Brother so,
Who did from Knife and Violence free,
His Label of Mortality.
Sirrah, reply'd the angry Beau,
You are a Fidler too I know,

Appendix

Then lent poor *Sola* such a Wherrit,
That prov'd quite Discord to his Spirit,
Who eager to revenge the stroke,
That would a Coward's Soul provoke,
His Passion grown so very fierie,
Now rais'd at least to *Alamire*,
In the Beau's face his head he flung,
And struck the Champion all along,
Who was so stunn'd with Blow and Fall,
As ifnock'd down with Cannon Ball;
The Foe with Courage still pursu'd,
Th' advantage as a Boxer shou'd,
And made the Beau at last Cry out,
Pray, Sir, be merciful as stout ;
Tear not my Wig for Heaven's sake,
Because 'twas Monsieur Dally's make ;
And I beseech you spare my Face,
For 'tis my only Market-place.
The Beaus that were before at distance,
Came now to Brother Fop's assistance,
Fell nobly on the Conqueror,
And bravely kick'd him like a Cur,
Loo'd on their Liv'ry-hounds, and fet-a
Whole Pack of Dogs on poor *Sonata*,
Who else 'tis verily supposen,
Had beat of Beaus at least a Dozen :
They kick'd him, punch'd him, stamp'd his Belley,
And almost beat him to a Jelly ;
Such Valour sure was never seen,
In gallant Heroes, and their Men,
That Twenty odd bold Champions shou'd,
Without the loss of Limb or Blood,
Be almost one poor Fidler's death,
And maul him, nay, in spight of 's teeth ;

Appendix

Who tho' he bid such stout defyance,
They laid him on like any Gyants,
And would have kill'd him on the spot,
As many warlike Heroes thought;
But that a Coffee-man came by,
And sav'd him by a fresh supply,
The Beaus, however, kept the Field,
And made their bloody Victim yield,
And after this most glorious manner,
Rais'd to themselves immortal Honour.
The Beaus that did in chief appear,
And signaliz'd their Valour here,
Some I already have set forth,
And now I'll show the others worth,
For all great Deeds should be Rewarded,
And in the Books of Fame recorded.

Beau *Archwag* next in place succeeds,
A following Fop that never leads,
But will int' any Mischief venture,
If others but before him enter;
Na, dare to take a Bear by th' Tooth,
If any'll open but his Mouth,
Or send a Challenge to a Cow'rd,
That he's first sure won't draw a Sword;
Nay, take a Scoundrel by the Nose,
If serv'd so first by other Beaus;
Or Kick a Rascal off the Walks,
Foot-ball'd before by fifty Folks,
And dare to half a Man defy,
That's if *Beau Cursitor* be by,
And 'twixt 'em both perhaps out-banter,
Some demi-hearted Bully-Ranter;
Tho' both at once were Cuff'd and Cow'd
By a poor Tickler of a Crowd,

Appendix

Who in the Dancing-Room attack'd-'em,
And before all the Ladies thwack'd-'em,
The Musick still kept playing on,
Till both were beaten to some tune,
Which makes the Beaus e'er since hate Fidlers,
As bad as Country-Dogs do Pedlers.
This famous *Archwag* you must know,
Was bred a home-spun Rural Beau;
For Country-Beaus are now as Common,
As Looby-Clowns, or Booby-Yeomen;
He does a good Estate inherit,
Which came by Birth, and not by Merit,
And chiefly when at Home converses,
With Setting-Spaniels, Hounds and Horses,
But when abroad, the time he passes
Away with hare-brain'd Fools and Asses :
His Dress is very Nice and fine,
Yet sits like Saddle on a Swine,
And nothing can delight him more,
Than kicking some Inferiour;
So to his rakish Sports we'll leave him,
Till Time and Age shall undeceive him.

Next these Fop *Pout-mouth* comes in show,
A flap Chap'd, round Back'd *City-Beau*,
Who by his Foot-men fights and rattles,
Kept lusty for their Master's battles;
Am'rous he is, but can't attack,
For want of Sense, above a Hack:
He would make Love, but knows not how,
But by his Liv'ry-Coach and Bow,
And thinks to charm the beauteous Sex,
By haughty Struts, and monkey Tricks;
But all his Grandure, and his Pride,
Have shot their roving Darts so wide,

Appendix

That with his utmost foppish Art,
He ne'er could wound one Female heart,
And is so noted for a Fool,
He's ev'ry Lady's ridicule;
His Cheeks so fleshy, plump and round,
No Trumpeter that strains to sound,
Can show ye such a foot-ball Face,
That Swells, or Pouts, with such a Grace;
Some think the pretty plump-Cheek'd Baby
A wet Nurse all his life has lay by,
And do with some assurance say,
He sucks a Bubby to this day,
Which puts his Face in such a trim,
Just like a painted Cherubim :
We'll leave the Pigs-nies at the Nipple,
To tug and play, suck Bub and tipple,
In few Years more he'll sure disdain
His Childish Tricks, and prove a Man.

Stand by, ye foppish Rakes, make room,
And let Beau *Cherry* timely come,
To show his Tulip Cheeks o'er-spread
With Lilly-white, and Rosy-red;
Wheter laid on by Art or Nature,
To add a lustre to his Feature,
Is often on the Walks disputed;
But for my part I'm confuted,
That the Gay vain blaspheming Fool,
Is much oblig'd to Spanish-Wooll,
White-washes, Powder and Pomatim,
Which makes the Fair despise and hate 'im,
He's wondrous Witty, but his Jests
Are on the Scriptures, or the Priests;
Religion he, in gross, denies,
Thinks to be wicked 's to be wise,

Appendix

And in his Banter often jossles
Juglers together with Apostles;
Upbraids 'em with their Boats and Nets,
And calls the holy Martyrs Cheats;
No diff'rence makes 'twixt Good and Evil,
But ranks together Saint and Devil;
Fancies Earth, Heav'n and all Mankind,
Blow'd into Form by some strange Wind,
And that each distant glorious Light,
That makes the Day, and Rules the Night
Are but Reflections, f'r ought we know,
Of Links and Flamboys here below:
Rare Theory had it learned Legs,
'Twould addle sure all B—r—t's Eggs,
And prove by new Philosophie,
The World could not Ovip'rous be.

The Chapel Clark in humble manner,
Came one day to entreat his Honour,
Like others of the Congregation,
To give the Priest some small Donation:
The Beau to show his Wit was great,
Reply'd, *My Friend, thou'rt come too late;
I've been so wicked, that I know,
My Soul's Convicted long ago,
Therefore no Coin shall I disburss'd,
To save a Soul already Curss'd,*
So farewell thou blaspheming Tony,
Who damn'd thy self to save thy Mony.

Beau of a Pigmy Race,
Must next my Muses Song disgrace;
That little Hop upon my Thumb,

.....
That low unmanlike human Creature,
At biggest but of Babboon stature:

Appendix

That Fig-leaf for a Woman's honour,
Who scarce could hide it if upon-her;
Or rather in a Marry'd Life,
A Cloak for some adult'rous Wife,
Fit to beneath no Title pass,
But Cuckold, Lap-Dog, Beau, or Ass :

: : : : : : :
: : : : : : :

His peaceful Sword in length may vigh,
With *Gaunt's* that does i' th' *Tow'r* ly;
And for his Wig tho' he's so small,
'Twould fit a Giant in *Guild-Hall*,
And hangs so low beneath his Wits,
That 'tis his Cusheon as he sits,
And when he stands a foot it reaches,
Below the Wastband of his Breeches,
That sure no *Porcupine* when spiteful,
Can look so bristly, and so frightful :
All Danger he abhors, and loves
A Scuffle worse than dirty Gloves,
But will as most Beau Cowards do,
His Footmen to the mischief loo,
But safe himself at distance stands,
Looing his Dogs, and Clapping Hands,
So Dastards often Quarrels make,
But of the Danger won't pertake,
Knowing 'tis always good to keep-in
Mem'ry, a whole Skin's best to sleep-in.
Some Ladies in the Walks long since,
Have spit in 's face for 's Impudence;
The Itch being Cur'd by fasting Spittle,
They thought 'twould Manners mend a little,
But found the spiteful application,
Caus'd very little Alteration;

Appendix

So as we found him shall we leave,
The flutt'ring Fop deminitive.

Beau *Lucifer* now play thy part,
And show how big and Proud thou art;
How Monstrous Tall, and fat thou'rt fed,
How strong thy Back, how weak thy Head,
What disproportion their remains,
Between thy Tub of Guts and Brains;
Thy Body's a Digesture, good
For nought, but to dissolve thy Food :
Upon thy Massy Trunk thy Head,
For Ornament is only made,
And as thou struts it sits the most
Like a turn'd Nob upon a Post,
Of ought, to which we can compare it,
And is a lofty empty Garret;
Thy Person, and thy Pride, are great
But small thy Parts and thy Estate,
And by thy Carriage art profest,
A Country Lubber at the best.
Go on, and show thy mighty Deeds,
And how thy Courage most exceeds;
Fright Country-people into Terrours,
Kick Fidlers, and thy poor Inferiours;
And when grown famous at this Sport,
May all Mankind despise thee for 't,
Laugh at thy Folly, Pride, Ill nature,
Who art, to thy own self a Satyr.

Beau *Finikin* next place supplies,
Like all the rest, more Nice than Wise,
No other Excellence professing,
But in the Art of Modish Dressing,

Appendix

All things put on with so much neatness,
He's the Sum-Total of Compleatness;
So Formal that he cou'd not blame-one,
To think him drest by Madam *Sa'mon*,
And treads so stiff, you'd say the Creature,
By Clock-work mov'd, and not by Nature.
With rich black Acres he's well stor'd,
And lives as great as any Lord,
For him the Pauper-Beaus oft Bully,
And they as oft make him their Cully.

Beau *Humpty-dumpty* next appears,
A merry Lump well grown in Years,
With Back and Breast like *Punchanello*,
But for his parts has not his fellow;
This is a Crumpling of some Title,
A Barronet, and thing of Mettle;
But only does himself degrade,
When Honour's Tax is to be paid,
And then too wisely saves his Purse,
He's no more Barr'net than a Horse,
Tho' most, two Titles do afford him,
Not only Sir-him, but my Lord-him.

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FINIS.

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